

“Integration, Not Segregation:” Japanese Americans in Chicago and Cleveland, 1942-1952

A Senior Honors Thesis

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Introduction

Most people are unaware of the significant role the Midwest played in accepting Japanese Americans after internment. From 1942 to 1945, the United States interned approximately 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry from the West Coast.¹ These individuals were regarded as security risks to the American nation, regardless of their citizenship status, political allegiance, or actual behavior. There have been numerous studies about why internment occurred, the effects of internment on the Japanese American community, and the significance of these events for American history. However, very few academic studies have explored how interned Japanese Americans resettled and how their migration patterns from the camps shaped community developments of a distinct ethnic and urban nature in the Midwest. This study proposes to do both by examining developments in Chicago and Cleveland.

The Japanese American resettlers in these cities encountered fewer problems than they had faced on the West Coast, which stemmed from widespread racial prejudice. Some of these problems included discrimination in housing, segregation into concentrated neighborhoods, and a lack of economic mobility beyond agriculture. Instead, in this resettlement of the Midwest the Japanese Americans were met with direct and indirect assistance during the war from the War Relocation Authority, and later from community resettlement agencies, to begin rebuilding their lives. In the process, the Japanese Americans formed urban Midwestern communities in

¹ See for example the works of Roger Daniels, which include *Concentration Camps U.S.A.: Japanese in the United States and Canada during World War II* (New York: Krieger, 1981) and *The Decision to Relocate the Japanese Americans* (New York: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1975). Other examples include Michi Nishiura Weglyn, *Years of Infamy* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996), Gary Okihiro, *Whispered Silences: Japanese Americans and World War II* (Seattle: University of Washington Press: 1996), and David O'Brien, *The Japanese American Experience* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991)

Chicago and Cleveland that emphasized social cohesiveness over ethnic clustering²

Social cohesiveness is different from ethnic clustering because the former suggest Japanese American community in ways other than the geographical isolation of the latter. These attempts at cohesion were done by promoting Japanese American interaction and involvement in the greater communities of Chicago and Cleveland, as well as amongst themselves to promote a strong, positive view of Japanese Americans as a whole. Ethnic clustering, on the other hand, suggests the earliest communities of Japanese American on the West Coast in which the population was characterized by geographic approximation, but with limited opportunities for economic and social advancement. A lot of these restrictions came as a result of fear and prejudices among the white majority, which were exaggerated after the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. The Pacific mobilization of the Japanese empire, with the surrender of U.S. forces in the Philippines in 1942 and raging war around the island of the Coral Sea and

² **Error! Main Document Only.**My interest in Japanese internment began with a research paper on the complications of resettlement resulting from military and War Relocation Authority (WRA) policy during evacuation and internment. My working hypothesis was that the process of resettling Japanese Americans from outside the camps was complicated early on by military actions during evacuation, as well as the WRA in its logistical efforts to handle evacuee property. This led me to participate in the “Month of Remembrance” program, which was a series of events sponsored by the Asian American Studies Program at The Ohio State University commemorating Japanese internment in art and history. Eventually this culminated in an oral history project in which a group of five undergraduate students, including me, conducted a video-recorded interview with the head of the Speaker’s Bureau of the Cleveland Japanese American Citizen’s League, Ed Ezaki. This hands-on experience was a great opportunity to gain a new and personal perspective from someone who had lived through internment and relocation as a child. Some of his responses to internment were genuinely surprising, as he conveyed the experience from a child’s point of view as a “summer camp.”

elsewhere, created widespread suspicion of Japanese Americans.³ These feelings helped bring the internment to fruition, but with resettlement came the idea of social cohesiveness as a counter view to the assimilation model pushed by the WRA because the Japanese Americans themselves played the key role in the direction of the resettlement committee in Chicago and Cleveland.

Chicago and Cleveland shared the distinction of being among the largest cities in the Midwest at that time. They each had the economic, ethnic, and social service structures needed to support resettlement, of which the WRA took advantage when it chose Chicago as the main city for resettlement. Not surprisingly, the Chicago Resettlers Committee (CRC) became the most prominent Japanese American community agency in Chicago, and arguably in the Midwest, following the war. In addition, the significant number of Japanese Americans in the city made it possible for the CRC to have Japanese American leadership that served Japanese American interests. Cleveland had fewer Japanese Americans than Chicago, but was just as important in the development of Japanese American community in the Midwest because it too had business and community interests in resettlement. In fact, the Cleveland Resettlement Committee was founded several years earlier than the Chicago Resettlers Committee, but did not have enough of a Japanese American presence to take control of resettlement and was subsequently run by white community leaders. This may also explain why Cleveland's resettlement group did not last into future years and was unable to adjust itself to service the long-term Japanese American community in the city, which the CRC did and still does to this day.

³ David Goldfield, et. al. *The American Journey: A History of the United States, Fourth Edition, Volume 2* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2004), pg. 810.

The history of Japanese Americans before internment is brief when compared to other ethnic immigrants. Emigration from Japan began in earnest only after 1890, just five years after the Japanese government made it legal to leave the country. According to historian Roger Daniels, Japanese immigration peaked between 1901 and 1908, when roughly 100,000 came to the United States and Hawaii.⁴ These immigrants are commonly referred to as “Issei,” or first generation Japanese, and their children born in the United States are known as “Nisei,” or second generation. By the mid-1920s, when anti-Japanese legislation restricted further immigration, the population was around 120,000. This number is small, when compared to the 30 million immigrants who came to the U.S. from the end of the Civil War to the 1920s.⁵

Many Issei found work in agriculture on the West Coast, where the majority of immigrants had settled. Indeed, a good number of Issei had come from modest farming backgrounds in Japan, where they were situated in lower-class socioeconomic strata. As such, many of them left Japan to improve their economic mobility in the agricultural system of the United States.⁶ On the whole, Japanese Americans on the Pacific Coast were successful in agriculture and maintaining farms and commercial properties. Though the number of farms owned by the Japanese made up only two percent of all farms in the region, the average value

⁴ Roger Daniels, *Concentration Camps U.S.A.: Japanese Americans and World War II* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971), pgs. 5-6. Daniels questions the accuracy of the federal government’s immigration records, as there were a little over 120,000 Japanese Americans in the United States in 1940.

⁵ Daniels, *Concentration Camps U.S.A.*, pg. 5.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pg. 7.

per acre of Japanese farms was \$279.96, compared to only \$37.94 per acre for all farms.⁷ This high value was due to the fact that the Japanese specialized in intensive crop production when compared to many other farms on the Pacific Coast. Before the evacuation, the estimated value of crops in California was \$32,317,700.⁸ The Japanese were an invaluable part of the agricultural and economic well being of the West Coast, a fact that incensed white farmers and others who saw the Japanese as a security threat to the nation.

Another factor that fueled prejudice against the Japanese Americans was clustering. Many immigrants and their children lived together in close-knit communities on the West Coast, a common strategy employed by other ethnic groups during this time in order to sustain a living. More than one-third of all Japanese Americans living in California prior to the war lived in just six counties, with another third living in Los Angeles County alone. This reflects the Japanese American concentration on the West Coast as a whole, with roughly 90 percent living in the three Pacific states of Washington, Oregon, and California.⁹ These ethnic communities were formed both by choice and by necessity, with many of their businesses and enterprises serving the needs of the Japanese themselves. As a result, they became conspicuous targets for racial discrimination, and were often dubbed “Little Tokyos.” Combined with the Osawa case in 1922, which forbade Issei from becoming citizens, and the Immigration Act of 1924 that halted Japanese immigration, lots of discrimination and prejudice came into play with internment.

⁷ U.S. Department of Interior and War Relocation Authority, “The Wartime Handling of Evacuee Property,” 1946, pg. 37.

⁸ “The Wartime Handling of Evacuee Property,” pg. 38.

⁹ Daniels, *Concentration Camps U.S.A.*, pg. 1.

These factors also contributed to the generational divide between Issei and Nisei, which the WRA perpetuated by favoring Nisei as the earliest resettlers from the camps.

Following Pearl Harbor, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1942. This order gave the military, specifically the Western Defense Command under the leadership of Lieutenant General John L. De Witt, the authority to prescribe areas from which “any and all persons” on the West Coast might be excluded. While not specifically stating that this was in effect for the Japanese Americans living in these areas, it was implied that this would be the case. A little under a month later, on March 18, Executive Order 9102 established a new federal agency, the War Relocation Authority (WRA), under the operation of civilian leaders, to handle relocation.¹⁰ It was the WRA’s charge later in the war to devise a plan for resettlement from the internment camps.

In the early stages of research on this thesis, my aim was to examine the various economic, social, and cross-generational issues that the Japanese faced as a result of resettlement. One such issue that I encountered in my research was how and why certain institutions promoted the idea of integration through population diffusion rather than advocating ethnic community and identity. Although this remains an important part of this thesis, new perspectives and approaches have come to light after analyzing many of the secondary works that focus on resettlement. The most important of my realizations is the importance of community resettlement agencies in Chicago and Cleveland, as well as local press coverage, played in the greater context of post-war urban culture in the Midwest.

¹⁰ Roger Daniels, *The Decision to Relocate the Japanese Americans* (New York: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1975), pgs. 49-52.

The Midwest is a valuable place for cultural and historical study because of its unique mix of urban and rural lifestyles. On the one hand, cities like Chicago and Cleveland developed as major centers of economic, ethnic, and social exchange while maintaining a traditional, working-class identity. This identity was commonly associated with the smaller, more agrarian-based communities that made up the majority of the Midwest. As such, these areas have historically been identified as valuing close, tight-knit communities, especially in the pre- and post-World War II eras. From housing and jobs, to simply having a network of friends with whom to socialize, many people living in the Midwest looked to each other for community support.

The Japanese Americans who came to Chicago and Cleveland both during and after the war found this kind of support. Many Japanese Americans had experienced either racial segregation in cities or the ethnic agricultural communities on the West Coast. Thus, many resettlers favored larger cities in the Midwest. With the resettlement infrastructure established by the WRA during the war geared toward major urban centers, the Japanese Americans could begin to rebuild their lives using the extensive economic and social networks that both cities had to offer. At the same time, resettlers redefined their sense of community to fit the geographic and social integration that came with urban anonymity in Chicago and Cleveland, which was vastly different from the clustered segregation of Japanese Americans before the war in major cities on the West Coast. These Midwestern Japanese Americans viewed themselves as consisting of hard-working citizens who had found a balance in their ethnic identity as “Japanese Americans” by breaking the stigma of the “Jap” label and ultimately achieving citizenship for

the Issei generation in the 1950s.

This situation raises many intriguing questions regarding the Japanese Americans who moved to cities. What were the differences between the WRA's policy of urban resettlement and that of the local community agencies that worked specifically with resettlers? Who made up the leadership in these organizations? Were there major generational differences in these new communities? Was there a focus on Japanese American leadership as opposed to white business and community figures with social agendas, or vice versa? These questions inevitably lead to many more questions. However, my hope is that I can produce some valuable, yet challenging, answers.

In order to provide some answers for these questions, I study Japanese Americans in Chicago and Cleveland. My regional perspective is particularly important for two reasons. First, much of the scholarship on Japanese Americans tends to focus on the West Coast, where this population has historically been concentrated and also where Japanese Americans were designated for internment. However, as more recent studies of racial formation have argued, race is a socially constructed category that can vary depending on the historical, political, social, and even regional contexts. Consequently, a larger study of Japanese American resettlement in the Midwest should produce a more nuanced interpretation about postwar racial conflict and accommodation.

My regional focus is also significant for a second reason: the current-day Midwestern population of Japanese Americans can be traced to wartime resettlement. In other words, the migration of this population following internment had long-term ramifications for the racial make-up of the Midwest. My objective then is to provide a fuller understanding about the

Japanese American community in the Midwest in cities such as Cleveland and Chicago. In addition, my study has the potential to offer insight into the local mainstream and, in Chicago's case, the Japanese American press to illuminate these subjects in a greater historical context.

Four chapters compose my thesis. Chapter 1 offers a brief overview of Japanese American resettlement during internment by way of relocation offices situated in major cities like Chicago and Cleveland. This chapter defines resettlement and provides insights into the infrastructure offered by the federal government for workers, Nisei college students, as well as insights into how Japanese Americans began to permanently resettle with the early assistance of the WRA. Chapters 2 and 3 are composed of the case studies of Chicago and Cleveland. Each respective chapter examines the economic, geographic, and generational distribution of the Japanese people, how each group was pictured in local newspapers, and how each group formed a community around the Japanese American social service organizations. With each community relatively defined in terms of its Japanese population, the concluding section compares the two cities to present an argument as to how community institutions promoted social cohesion through their ethnic, political, and social efforts, while still providing services that allowed Japanese Americans to form community bonds. These cities were microcosms for the reception that Japanese American citizens received in the Midwest in general.

What I hope to convey in my thesis is that the Midwest was just as significant as the West Coast in the formation of cultural, ethnic, and social identity--but in different ways. The process of internment significantly altered Japanese culture in the United States in terms of its traditions and familial practices. Ed Ezaki, a former internee who resettled in Cleveland, specifically commented on how he never ate with his parents in the mess hall, thereby distancing

the family in what is considered a normal familial practice. Individually, many Japanese Americans found themselves subjected to intense public scrutiny during and immediately after the war, with their economic opportunities and citizenship rights still under question.

Resettlement, on the other hand, posed new challenges for the Japanese to negotiate, such as how they would rebound from the financial devastation they experienced, as well as the process of rebuilding or forming new communities in areas that were much different from what they had known before the war. The formation of Japanese American communities in the urban Midwest, specifically Chicago and Cleveland, will enhance these issues and bring about new perspectives that are missing from the topic of Japanese internment and resettlement.

Chapter 1: The Push for War-Time Resettlement

Resettlement was the process through which the Japanese Americans left the internment camps, using the infrastructure of the WRA's relocation offices during the war. It was bureaucratic in nature, as the WRA set specific guidelines and made potential resettlers file a plethora of paperwork proving their loyalty. Not only that, but many Japanese Americans had to prove they could find work and housing largely on their own, ironically after the government had all but ruined the majority of internees financially. Resettlement is the most common way of describing how Japanese Americans began to rebuild their communities and their lives during and after the war. Ultimately, there were three phases of resettlement through which the Japanese Americans began to leave the internment camps: work-related, student-related, and permanent.

The WRA made the notion of resettlement a priority in its formative months in spring of 1942. This decision stemmed from its members' belief that the internees should lead their lives just as they had before the war. Indeed, one of the most difficult adjustments for the evacuees was deciding how to spend their free time in the camps. Before internment, "many adult family members were active in productive, paid employment" through family-run businesses and farms. The question arose: should Japanese Americans be obligated to work under the confines of camp life, or were they prisoners of a government that was to provide for their welfare during their incarceration?¹

Under the direction of Milton Eisenhower, the WRA decided to establish a work program

¹ Wendy Ng, *Japanese American Internment During World War II: A History and Reference Guide* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press: 2002), pg. 43.

so that the internees could have a sense of independence through gainful employment. Ironically, the WRA compromised its own efforts because internees were not allowed to leave the camps without permission from the WRA authorities. Moreover, the geographic and physical isolation of the camps made it difficult for potential workers to go very far beyond the camps themselves. An internee work corps was proposed, similar to the Works Progress Administration, in which volunteers could enlist to be eligible for work. The corps would develop land, build camp structures, produce food, and manufacture war-related items. However, this idea never received widespread support among the internees, and floundered due to a lack of volunteers.² As a result the WRA had to expand its efforts in resettling Japanese Americans

Student resettlement for the Nisei was especially important. According to historian Wendy Ng, in March 1942 the Student Relocation Council formed and held its first meeting at the University of California, Berkeley. This group of educators, including the president of U.C. Berkeley, Robert Sproul, and sociologist Robert W. O'Brien, "met to address the problems and issues facing Nisei students who were attending colleges and universities on the West Coast, and how the impending evacuation order would affect their status."³ In order to expand its efforts, the Council became a national organization by 1943, with its main office located in Philadelphia.⁴ In conjunction with the WRA, this group was to coordinate efforts to allow Nisei college students to leave the camps on their own.

² *Ibid.* The arguments in these two sections come from Ng.

³ Ng, *Japanese American Internment*, pg. 47.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pg. 48. The National Student Relocation Council is also mentioned on page 42.

As a whole, college students made up a small percentage of the 120,000 interned Japanese Americans. O'Brien estimated that there were roughly 3,200 students of Japanese descent enrolled in universities on the West Coast as of 1941. In addition, 278 Nisei attended school outside the West Coast.⁵ Nevertheless, this group represented the first possibility for the WRA to negotiate the conditions of resettlement.

Interest in the predicament of these students was not lost on some high-ranking officials, including the governor of California, Culbert Olson. In early May 1942, Olson wrote to President Roosevelt about the potential damage of incarcerating Japanese American students, saying that "the education of those who might become influential leaders of the loyal American-born Japanese will be abruptly closed. Such a result would be injurious not only to them, but to the nation since well-trained leadership for such persons will be needed after the present war." He also expressed concerns about the financial-aid needs of students who would be accepted by Midwestern and Eastern schools.⁶ At this point it was safe to say that the federal government had a direct interest in the process of resettlement via its civilian agency, the WRA.

Two events in the formative years of internment were significant to the efforts of resettlement outside the camps, the first of which was student resettlement. The second event was the establishment of relocation offices for permanent resettlement in major cities throughout

⁵ Allen W. Austin, *From Concentration Camps to Campus: Japanese American Students and World War II* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 2004), pg. 10.

⁶ Bill Hosokawa, *Nisei: The Quiet Americans* (Boulder, CO: The University Press of Colorado, 2002), pgs. 353-355. According to Hosokawa, "There is reason to believe Eisenhower had a hand in drafting the President's reply to Olson, for Eisenhower already had asked Clarence Pickett, the prominent Quaker leader, to head a committee (National Student Relocation Council) to devise plans for aiding Nisei students."

the nation, except on the West Coast. The first of the seven “principal” relocation offices was opened in Chicago on January 4, 1943, and in the weeks and months that followed similar offices were set up in Cleveland, Little Rock, Salt Lake City, New York City, Kansas City, and Denver. These offices would direct thirty-five “subordinate” offices located within the vicinity of each principal office.

Both types of offices were responsible for a number of similar duties and functions. They relayed information to local communities about the Japanese evacuees and the WRA program, and gave the WRA information on public attitudes toward Japanese Americans in communities where evacuees were being considered for relocation.⁷ More important to the relocated Japanese, however, was where they would be able to find suitable jobs and a living environment to match. This issue was also a major concern of the relocation offices.

By July 1, 1943, nearly 9,000 of the 120,000 interned Japanese Americans were being resettled back into private life as citizens. While this made up less than 10 percent of the total number of interned Japanese, it was a significant number. Both Issei and Nisei, who had lived in a relatively concentrated area of land on the Pacific Coast, were scattered throughout the United States. They occupied all but seven of the 48 existing states of the time, but the focal areas of relocation were the Great Lakes region and the Inter-Mountain West. Large cities such as Chicago took in about 1,500 Japanese at the time and received the bulk of the relocated Japanese population because of greater opportunities for securing employment and adequate

⁷ War Relocation Authority, *Annual Report of the WRA: July 1 to September 30, 1943*. From “Japanese Americans and Resettlement from the Internment Camps: A Study of its Complications from Military and WRA Policy.”

living space.⁸

The make-up of these citizens was such that the need for steady employment and residence was their utmost concern upon release from the camps. Nearly half of the Japanese internees had worked in domestic service and agriculture, while the rest had held a variety of occupations ranging from unskilled labor to technical and professional work. At the time there was a widespread need for household workers in the larger cities. At first this demand was fairly easily met because the majority of former internees were under 30 years of age and unmarried, usually being a son or daughter of alien parents who were still forced to live in the camps. However, demand quickly outstripped the supply of these former internees who were the younger, more energetic and more qualified group. These Nisei resettlers, on the whole, were not interested in limiting themselves to menial domestic work, as they had greater aspirations for industrial and white-collar employment. Employers could not go to the camps for more employees because the older people, aliens, and the extremely young children became the more prominent population in the camps.⁹

At a time when the primary objective of relocation was completed, the WRA recognized that not all Japanese Americans were a threat, especially those who were considered to be the most assimilated. This meant that Nisei students were among the first given the proverbial “nod” toward resettlement, but it was not an easy task. The WRA was still working out its position as a civilian extension of the federal government. Also, the relocation offices were opened in close cooperation with local agencies and organizations in large cities in the Midwest and East.

⁸ “Annual Report of the WRA, 1943,” pgs. 3, 4.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pgs. 3-5

Still, more and more Nisei were given the opportunity to resettle in cities like Chicago and Cleveland, and these offices were instrumental in helping them find employment and housing. As it is discussed in the next section on Chicago, a major development occurred when Japanese American leadership took the place of the WRA with the Chicago Resettlers Committee.

Chapter 2: Chicago Resettlement

In 1942, a Japanese American nurse died in an automobile accident in Chicago. Because of racial discrimination, no cemetery would accept her body for burial, and it was kept in a funeral home for an entire week. Finally, the Japanese Mutual Aid Society intervened and purchased a small communal plot in the Montrose Cemetery so the body could be buried. Another cemetery threatened to exhume the body of an individual of Japanese descent who was buried there. The Montrose communal plot was small, since it was purchased at a time when the Japanese population in Chicago numbered only a few hundred.¹ However, the Japanese population in Chicago would boom to more than 20,000 over the course of the war and resettlement, making burial sites for aging Issei and other Japanese Americans one of the many issues facing resettlers. Such issues were at the forefront of a Japanese American-led, urban Midwestern resettlement group, the Chicago Resettlers Committee (CRC). The Japanese Americans in Chicago also developed a specific sense of ethnic ownership of resettlement, as Japanese Americans apart from the government agencies that handled resettlement. Therefore, the resettlers formed their own community agency in the latter years of war-time resettlement that focused on social cohesion with the city's Japanese American population, both Issei and Nisei alike, and would become a lasting institution for Japanese Americans in Chicago.

This chapter examines Chicago resettlement chronologically through the lenses of the city's mainstream, nationally circulated newspapers, as well as its Japanese American press. In

¹ Masaoka Osaka, "Japanese Americans: Melting Into the All-American Melting Pot." *Ethnic Chicago: A Multicultural Portrait, 2nd Edition* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Company, 1997), pg. 529.

addition, it uses primary documents from the CRC to illustrate Japanese American encounters with the greater community and their broader struggles over issues like housing. Because Chicago had the biggest resettler population in the United States both during and immediately after the war, its press published local and national stories directly related to the Japanese American experience, both positive and negative. Not only that, but Chicago developed a Japanese American newspaper, the *Chicago Shimpo*, that served the interests of the growing population by reporting examples of community interaction and special interest pieces. This newspaper also longed to be as prominent as the Japanese American newspapers of the West Coast by increasing circulation and readership, thus involving the community at large. As for the local CRC, its development was not as early as resettlement agencies in other cities like Cleveland because of the significant presence of the WRA, which worked with other local agencies on resettlement. However, the CRC eventually separated itself by having the capacity for Japanese American leadership, which supported social cohesion among the largest constituency of Japanese Americans in any and all issues they faced, ranging from housing and employment to youth programming and elderly/welfare counseling. Ultimately, the CRC became the most significant social organization for Japanese Americans in Chicago because it was run by Japanese Americans, for Japanese Americans.²

² For further evidence that other Japanese Americans had similar arguments to make about the CRC, see Togo Tanaka's essay entitled "Chicago's Newest Citizens." *Japanese Chicago City Directory: 1949* (Chicago, IL: 1949) JASC Legacy Center Archives, 100-101. I also cite this source later in this section, with the aforementioned argument coming from the following quote, "...the War Relocation Authority had done the pioneering job. But nobody expected them to be on the scene permanently." Setsuko Matsunaga Nishi also uses this argument of "Japanese American ownership" in Setsuko Matsunaga Nishi, "Restoration of Community in Chicago Resettlement," *Japanese American National Museum Quarterly* 2 (1998-

I use secondary sources frequently in this chapter, as several scholars have written significant, yet understudied, analyses regarding Chicago's Japanese American population. One such scholar is Charlotte Brooks, who wrote an essay entitled "In the Twilight Zone Between Black and White: Japanese American Resettlement and Community in Chicago, 1942-1945."³ Brooks' writing is an historical study that focuses on Japanese Americans as positioned between the two primary ethnic groups in Chicago, blacks and whites. Her thesis is that many early resettlers to Chicago faced little discrimination because "to the Chicagoans they encountered, they were nonwhite first and Japanese second."⁴ These "Chicagoans," as Brooks defines them, were the white, middle class citizens who had little to no experience with the Japanese American people prior to the war. Because whites generally enjoyed a much higher status in Chicago than the blacks, Brooks argues that "the appearance of Japanese Americans challenged those accustomed to this biracial hierarchy of color and privilege." Therefore, the Japanese Americans were often seen, and often saw themselves, as a buffer between the two groups.⁵

Brooks' historical narrative looks at the pre-war Japanese American communities on the

99): pgs. 13, 6. I also cite this source extensively, while making every effort to add and enhance its arguments.

³ Brooks wrote this piece as a graduate student at Northwestern University, where she obtained her Ph.D. in history. She is now an Assistant Professor at the University at Albany, State University of New York (SUNY), where she teaches courses in American history, particularly focusing on ethnicity and immigration. Her essay was featured in the *Journal of American History*, volume 4 (December 2000): Issue 86, pgs 1655-1687, and it is an extensive analysis of the ethnic dynamics among blacks, Japanese Americans, and whites during resettlement and World War II.

⁴ Charlotte Brooks, "In the Twilight Zone Between Black and White: Resettlement and Community in Chicago, 1942-1945." *Journal of American History* 4 (2000); pg.1655.

⁵ Brooks, "In the Twilight Zone Between Black and White," pg. 1656.

West Coast, gives a brief overview of internment, and examines the early efforts of the WRA in resettlement. However, the majority of her essay concentrates on Chicago resettlement itself. Brooks gives special attention to the issues surrounding employment and housing in relation to her thesis of racial “inbetweenness.” With regard to the job situation, she states that “Nisei workers provided an attractive option for managers reluctant or unwilling to hire African Americans,” thus further solidifying their status as a racial “other” while still gravitating more towards the white culture.⁶ She also describes the housing discrimination that took place in Chicago with Japanese Americans as placing resettlers in transitional neighborhoods “that defined their inbetweenness in physical terms.”⁷ Brooks concludes by saying that the Japanese American situation in Chicago was complicated by uncertainty about the position of Japanese Americans in the greater community, a position that seemed to be higher than that of blacks, but lower than whites in overall economic, political, and social status.

Brooks’ essay is a sophisticated look at Chicago resettlement from a multi-racial perspective. Brooks’ primary research is extensive, as she makes use of documents from archives such as the Brethren Historical Society to describe the religious groups involved in resettlement, as well as the Japanese American Service Committee, which houses the CRC archives. She also utilizes a number of important theses from Japanese American sociologists, who wrote case studies about the Japanese American community in Chicago, and treats them as primary sources. In terms of contextual information, Brooks makes very astute observations on ethnic “inbetweenness” as it relates to Chicago’s ethnic communities as a whole. For example,

⁶ *Ibid.*, pg. 1666.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pg. 1675.

she describes the housing situation as being controlled by racist landlords and other white renters in the city, many of whom objected to the presence of ethnic minorities, especially Chinese, Filipino, and Mexican citizens in the 1920s.⁸ This illustration adds a level of nuance to her thesis that enriches the significance of her findings about the Japanese American population in Chicago during this time.

However, there are some issues with her focus that detract from her work on certain aspects of resettlement itself. She shortchanges the importance of the WRA, as well as the local resettlement agencies, saying that “the majority of Nisei relied on each other for support and assistance.”⁹ While her arguments and research certainly point in this direction, one can just as easily argue that without these agencies, the infrastructure for resettlement that allowed Japanese Americans to leave the camps would not have been established in the first place. Also, she describes the CRC as an organization established by Japanese Americans, mostly Nisei, to give personal and social assistance on issues that were overlooked by church and civic groups. While this is certainly the case, the CRC also had a hand in advertising job opportunities and helping with housing referrals, which meant that the resettlers had to look to an organization for assistance. The major difference was that it was facilitated by Japanese American leadership, which makes it a vital link between the previous organizations interested in resettlement and the Japanese Americans themselves. This idea is the foundation on which I will argue that Japanese American resettlement in Chicago was both a process of mainstream community integration, as it was encouraged by the WRA and other local groups, and the eventual emphasis on community

⁸ *Ibid.*, pg. 1674.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pg. 1657.

through social cohesion via Japanese American leadership and perspective, as it was embodied in the CRC.

Resettlement did not introduce Japanese Americans to Chicago. According to author Masaoka Osaka, the first known Japanese national in the city was a man named Kamenosuke Nishi, who moved from San Francisco in 1893 during the time of the Columbian Exposition. From that time until the start of the war, the Japanese American population had slowly climbed to about 300. Most of these individuals made their living in the city by running small shops or working in restaurants, but there were some Japanese firms, such as the Nippon Shipping Company, that hired Japanese workers. Because this group was small and relatively inconspicuous in the vast Chicago landscape, they were able to maintain their daily lives through the beginning of the war without widespread public persecution.¹⁰

The first evacuees arrived on June 12, 1942. Eventually, the rate at which resettlers streamed into the city reached the level of twenty-five per day, and the community at large held roughly 5,100 by the end of 1944. At its peak from 1945-1946, about 20,000 Japanese Americans resettled in Chicago, which was the largest population in the United States in the years following the war. This migration leveled off somewhat due to the reopening of the West Coast after all ten camps were closed in early 1946.¹¹ In 1950, nearly 8 percent (or 17,000) of

¹⁰ Masaoka Osaka, "Japanese Americans: Melting Into the All-American Melting Pot." *Ethnic Chicago: A Multicultural Portrait, 2nd Edition* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Company, 1997), pgs. 528, 529. "Partly because the group was small, unlike their counterparts on the West Coast, they continued to conduct their daily lives in Chicago without public persecution, even during World War II."

¹¹ Perry Duis and Scott LaFrance, *We've Got a Job to Do: Chicagoans and World War II* (Chicago: Chicago Historical Society, 1992), 56.

all Japanese Americans in the United States lived in Chicago.¹² It was clear that Chicago would become the model for resettlement because of the sheer number of resettlers, which required a highly coordinated effort between the WRA and local outreach organizations.

Resettlement continued to evolve as the needs of the relocated Japanese expanded. A large part of these efforts came from continued cooperation between civic and religious groups and the WRA. In Chicago, “close to forty field agents from sixteen different organizations worked closely with Japanese Americans to help them adjust to their new lives.”¹³ Two of the most active groups were the Church of the Brethren and the Society of Friends (Quakers). The Brethren group, in conjunction with the American Friends Service Committee, opened hostels to temporarily house Japanese American resettlers as they helped arrange employment opportunities before and after their release from the camps.¹⁴

According to Brooks, the motivation behind these hostels was not solely to provide necessary shelter for the Japanese, but also “to push assimilation as the primary goal of resettlement.” Not only did the hostel’s efforts promote assimilation, but they also shaped the public perception of Japanese Americans in Chicago as representing the Japanese American culture as a whole. The WRA refused to allow Nisei to leave camp unless they could find residence in cities of their choosing, i.e. cities that would accept them. Hostels were a temporary

¹² Virginia Fujibayashi, “Occupational and Residential Changes of Chicago’s Japanese American Evacuees” (M.A. Thesis, University of Chicago, Date Unknown) pgs. 8-10.

¹³ Charlotte Brooks, “In the Twilight Zone Between Black and White: Resettlement and Community in Chicago, 1942-1945,” *The Journal of American History* 4 (2000): 86, pg. 1661. Brooks’ work is a major source of inspiration for the context of the Chicago section.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

solution to this problem, but potential resettlers had to apply to individual hostels in Chicago.¹⁵

This meant that the owners could screen all candidates and reject those whom they considered less desirable. Mary and Ralph Smeltzer, who managed the Brethren hostel, explained her criteria for successful applicants in March 1943:

‘Would he represent the Japanese people well? Is he deserving?...Does he have a distinctly good appearance?...What is his attitude? Is he anxious to create a favorable public opinion for Japanese or is he only concerned about making money or his own betterment?’¹⁶

Some resettlers began to break from WRA guidelines, especially on the jobs made available to them. Initially, many Japanese Americans sought employment in Chicago’s mainstream economy, when before they had been limited to mostly domestic positions. Factors such as wartime labor shortages and a lack of anti-Japanese sentiment (or presence) in the city, encouraged these individual efforts. As a result, some Nisei began to bypass the WRA and other employment agencies, applying for positions listed in the daily want ads and through the United States Employment Service. Those who continued to use the WRA began to refuse offers to go into domestic work and asked to be placed in industrial factories. By April 1943, the first wave of resettlers reported their success stories to these agencies and noted the lack of organized opposition to either their employment or resettlement.¹⁷

¹⁵ Brooks, “In the Twilight Zone Between Black and White,” pgs 1661-1662.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* Also see pg. 1663: “The Smeltzers and many others involved in the resettlement groups embraced assimilation because they believed that the failure of Japanese Americans to integrate themselves into the white population before the war had created the justifications that led to the internment.”

¹⁷ Brooks, “In the Twilight Zone Between Black and White,” pgs.1665-66.

There was also a conscious understanding in the Chicago mainstream press that the city would play a vital part in Japanese American resettlement. The *Chicago Daily-Tribune* was one of the most widely circulated daily newspapers in the city, and it carried specific stories about the Japanese American experience on a national and local level throughout the war. One revealing story from 1943 talks about resettlement from the Gila River internment camp in Arizona, and how both the camp officials and Japanese American advisors painted a bleak picture of the West Coast situation. Citing a camp editorial, the story explains that “if California is opened and the *Nisei* stop resettling, then the results will have been bad...for prejudice-bound California in definitely not a place for *Nisei* who wish to be other than a farmer.” Instead, it proclaimed that Chicago was to become “the future business and cultural center for Japanese Americans,” and that resettlement should continue as it was mapped out by the WRA.¹⁸ Not only that, but it emphasized *Nisei* as the only resettlers, which speaks to the greater generational differences between *Issei* and *Nisei* that were upheld by the WRA’s resettlement process.

Going further, the article also mentions a law that was passed by the Arizona legislature by which newspapers would have to report any transactions between Japanese Americans and state businesses, punishable by a \$1000 fine. Backed by local farmers, this measure would make it next to impossible for Japanese citizens to make a successful living outside the camps in Arizona. Although it was struck down by a local judge, this piece of legislation was used to support an outward migration of resettlers to the Midwest, specifically Chicago.¹⁹ This type of

¹⁸ “Advocate Move to Chicago for Japs in Arizona” (*Chicago Daily-Tribune*: October 4, 1943). Proquest Historical Newspapers: Accessed through the Chicago Historical Society.

¹⁹*Ibid.*

economic prejudice made it extremely difficult for Japanese Americans to comfortably resettle anywhere near the West Coast. Hence the Midwest was looked upon as the most hopeful site of resettlement by many Japanese Americans and the WRA.

But perhaps the most telling example the article gives is a testimonial from Hiroshi Yamamoto, a former Gila River internee living in Chicago as a landscape gardener. His published statements are precursors to some of the major issues the Japanese Americans would face in Chicago. For example, Yamamoto spoke about housing by saying that the tenement houses around the Loop, the primary business area of Chicago, are occupied by various racial groups; “due to the heavy racial differences and composition of the city, one meets with little discrimination.” He also addressed the generational difficulties in finding employment, stating that the only jobs available for Issei are in domestic and low-paying service positions.²⁰

Although Yamamoto’s example was mostly used to highlight the positives of the WRA’s resettlement program, it is still important because it contextualizes national resettlement with a distinctly local resettler perspective through the mainstream media. It also shows the relationship that some resettled Japanese Americans had with the WRA, serving as on-the-spot advisors to the situation in Chicago and the Midwest in general, which when compared to the pre-war West Coast was overwhelmingly positive.

However, not all mainstream stories about Japanese Americans were favorable. One of the earliest examples involved the Japanese Tea House located in Jackson Park, a common gathering spot for the pre-war Japanese population. It was torn down in July 1942, at the behest of federal customs officers stationed in Chicago, out of fear that “some patriotic person would

²⁰ *Ibid.*

set fire to it.” Indeed, as the war progressed, the surrounding Japanese garden was heavily vandalized.²¹ Despite this, the WRA officials saw these types of disturbances as isolated incidents, and in no way thought they reflected negatively on the city that held the most hope for Japanese resettlement.

There were also incidents where other Asian groups in Chicago feared being mistaken for Japanese. According to Duis and LaFrance, “some Chinese wore buttons proclaiming their ancestry as a defense against discrimination,” and ethnic publications were quick to point out the differences between their groups and the Japanese. Another community affected was the Filipino community; close to 4,000 Filipinos lived in Chicago, one of the largest concentrations in the United States. In fact, the Filipino National Council issued its own buttons with the words “Filipino– U.S.A.” to more than 35,000 Filipino citizens across the country. Two weeks after Pearl Harbor, *Chicago Daily News* columnist Sydney J. Harris commented on the possibility of ethnic confusion in the city: “Don’t stare rudely at the dark-skinned little man who passes you on the street. He is most likely a loyal Filipino who is aching to get at the Japs as much as any other American citizen.”²²

The use of the word “Jap” remained common in many newspapers, which amplified some of the negative aspects of Chicago resettlement. According to Osaka, four of the five major daily

²¹ Duis and LaFrance, “We’ve Got a Job To Do,” pg. 56.

²² *Ibid.*, pg. 55. Also see Roger W. Lotchin’s *The Bad City in the Good War: San Francisco, Los Angeles, Oakland, and San Diego* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2003) for a good discussion on ethnic and urban life on the West Coast leading up to World War II. Lotchin goes into some detail on what he calls Japanese America “relocation” and the effect it had on California’s ethnic groups, including Chinese and Filipinos.

newspapers in Chicago supported the influx of Japanese Americans, although the vernacular they used remained “Jap,” or “Japs.”²³ Several reports were published in the *Chicago Daily-Tribune* detailing Japanese American difficulties in the labor market. In April 1943, citizens of Marengo, a town just outside Chicago, expressed their dismay at the hiring of sixteen Japanese Americans to work as truck gardeners for Curtiss Candy Company. A former commander of the American Legion post, as well as the major of Marengo, voiced their opinions by saying that “we’ve read too much about the Japs becoming citizens so they can spy on us...they may be good citizens, but it is just their tough luck that they have Japanese ancestry.”²⁴ Another piece of information reveals that the company hired the Japanese American workers through the WRA after they were unable to use Mexican farm labor through the United States Employment Service.²⁵ This controversy shows that prejudiced people considered the Japanese Americans an unwanted burden, and that resettlement was not entirely a smooth endeavor.

Another article detailed the difficulties that some resettlers faced while working in Chicago’s well-known transportation industry. In July 1944, the Illinois Central Railroad was forced to lay off close to 60 Japanese American maintenance workers due to threats of a walk-out from members of the American Federation of Labor. Apparently, this action was taken at the request of the army, which ordered a background check on all the resettled employees.

According to the railroad’s president, “The Illinois Central doubtless will be requested by the

²³ Osaka, “Japanese Americans: Melting Into the All-American Melting Pot,” pg. 527.

²⁴ “Object to Jap Farmer Group Near Marengo” (*Chicago Daily-Tribune*: April 25, 1943). Proquest Historical Newspapers: Accessed through the Chicago Historical Society.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

appropriate government agency (the WRA) to put back to work those men whose records are found to be satisfactory.”²⁶ Indeed, it was the WRA that filled these job shortages on the railroad, but it was the army that intervened to have these workers cross-checked. Not only does this reflect a larger rift between the WRA’s goal of resettlement and the military’s desire to keep them in the camps, but also how local labor interests displayed their suspicions and deep-seated prejudices against the presence of Japanese Americans in the workplace. Such feelings were not as intense as they had been on the West Coast, however, and were more a result of lingering perceptions of Japanese Americans as “the enemy” during the war.

Nearly all mainstream stories about Japanese Americans in Chicago during the war mentioned the WRA as the agency in charge of resettlement, which indicates that its place in the community was significant in shaping the public perception of resettlers as good, loyal citizens. One article from 1945 described the WRA as “the federal agency responsible for dealing with resettlement problems of Americans of Japanese descent.”²⁷ As mentioned earlier, the WRA was the main entity that detailed and implemented nearly all aspects of the resettlement process, from their initial efforts in 1942 up to the end of the war. This did not mean, however, that it was autonomous in its approach, far from it in fact.

The same article detailed an event at which representatives from the WRA met with the National Council of Jewish Women in Chicago to screen a film about camp life and resettlement. Among the details of this government-produced film were that it showed “the contribution of

²⁶ “Railroad Takes Jap-Americans off Track Jobs” (*Chicago Daily-Tribune*: July 29, 1944). Proquest Historical Newspapers: Accessed through the Chicago Historical Society.

²⁷ “War Time Life of Nisei to Be Theme of Meet” (*Chicago Daily-Tribune*: October 14, 1945). Proquest Historical Newspapers: Accessed through the Chicago Historical Society.

resettlers to the country's war effort, and news flashes of Nisei service men in European war theaters."²⁸ Clearly this was an effort to align a local social service agency of a distinct ethnic interest with resettlement in Chicago. One of the strategies of the WRA was to employ these types of community organizations in large cities in the Midwest, cities with significant economic and social bases, to lay the groundwork for Japanese American integration. Therefore, these coordinated efforts were solely on behalf of the Japanese American resettlers, with minimal influence from the Japanese Americans themselves.

However, with the number of resettlers to Chicago growing exponentially, new leadership in the Japanese American community developed. As a result, many resettlers felt that a Japanese American press should be established to represent the largest population in the United States outside the camps. In 1945, the *Chicago Shimpō* was formed with the help of Ryoichi Fujii, a former internee who became head writer and editor for a number of years.²⁹ Aside from Fujii's educational and political background, what is most interesting is that he was a younger Issei at a time when many key leaders in Chicago were Nisei. This seemingly minor detail is significant because it offers a contrasting example to the idea that Japanese American leadership in Chicago and in general was marked by a generational difference and led solely by Nisei, who were in fact the majority of the resettler population. It also marks one of the first instances

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Online Archive of California, "Finding Aid for the Ryoichi Fujii Papers, 1919-1999: Biography." Access date unknown. <http://content.cdlib.org/view;jsessionid=b1FO0XHcC9bnSv5I?docId=kt6v19q42b&chunk.id=bioghist-1.8.3>. From 1936 to 1940, Fujii was a member of the American Communist Party, but with internment he became a key figure in advocating resettlement to Chicago. He also obtained a Masters degree from Oberlin College in 1934, which shows another link between key figures in resettlement between Chicago and Cleveland.

where a uniquely Japanese American service was offered, which not surprisingly coincided around the same time that the Chicago Resettlers Committee was founded.³⁰

The Chicago Resettlers Committee (CRC) was founded in late 1945 at the urging of Nisei advisors to the WRA in Chicago and from other resettlement agencies. In one sense, it was a preemptive measure to the eventual closing of the WRA as the war drew to a close, but it also indicates that Japanese Americans did play a small role in resettlement as minor consultants. However, this timing benefited the Japanese American leadership in Chicago because, for the first time, Japanese Americans were able to take charge of the resettlement situation, which allowed them to seek more influential positions in the community. As a result, the earliest executive board was representative of the major Japanese American community in Chicago—Issei, Nisei, religious leaders, newspapers representatives, and a slew of prominent Chicagoans in fields such as business, labor, housing, and social/race relations.³¹

The earliest meetings of the CRC took place in “a small group of store-front offices located at 1110 North LaSalle Street, on the near North Side of Chicago.”³² As a non-profit, community-based organization, the Committee engaged itself in social services and cultural and community programming. These efforts took shape in the form of job placement, housing,

³⁰ The African American press in Chicago, with newspapers like *The Chicago Defender* and *The Chicago Crusader*, was also considered for this thesis, and will be a future site for more extensive research.

³¹ Setsuko Matsunaga Nishi, “Restoration of Community in Chicago Resettlement.” *Japanese American National Museum Quarterly* 2 (1998-99): 13, pg. 6. Also see Togo Tanaka, “Chicago’s Newest Citizens.” *Japanese Chicago City Directory: 1949* (Chicago, IL: 1949) JASC Legacy Center Archives.

³² *Ibid.*

general counseling services, and “helping individuals secure access to educational and public facilities.” In addition, the CRC participated in the broader Council for Social Agencies and received a substantial amount of funding from the Community Fund, a financial “chest” from which welfare organizations could draw money to set up their operations.³³

One of the CRC’s overarching goals was to bridge the generational gap between Issei and Nisei that was often at the root of their problems. Efforts were made to incorporate the older Issei as a part of its leadership on an equal, if at times shaky, level with the Nisei. Indeed, many Nisei were considered the public spokespersons addressing the larger (predominantly white) society and acted as intermediaries because they were viewed as having more in common with mainstream American values than their first-generation family members. Much of this perception came from the WRA’s early resettlement of mostly younger Nisei, and as such a majority of the Japanese American leadership came from the younger generation.³⁴ The first president of the CRC was a Nisei, Harry Mayeda, but four of the six main officer positions were occupied by Issei. Also, the first executive director, Corky Kawasaki, was a younger Issei who figured prominently in the early stages of the CRC’s efforts to integrate Japanese Americans resettlers with the community at large.³⁵

In spite of these efforts, cultural and generational differences continued to bedevil resettlers. Economically, many Issei became dependent on welfare services because they could

³³ Togo Tanaka, “Chicago’s Newest Citizens,” *Japanese Chicago City Directory: 1949* (Chicago, IL: 1949). JASC Legacy Center Archives, pgs.100-104. The Community Fund aspect of the CRC is cited in Nishi, “Restoration of Community in Chicago Resettlement,” pgs 8, 10.

³⁴ Nishi, “Restoration of Community in Chicago Resettlement,” pg. 6.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pgs. 6-8.

not get the higher paying, white-collar jobs that the Nisei were capable of securing. There was a stigma that surrounded welfare, especially when many Issei had been accustomed to supporting their families before the war. John Yoshino, a case worker during the time of resettlement for the Cook County Welfare Department, noted that it became easier for Issei to accept public aid as they became acculturated to the American system of social welfare, although it was still seen as a psychologically shameful practice. The feeling was, “if the government was responsible for (our) incarceration (and had taken care of us in the camps), then the least they should do is take care of us outside the camps.”³⁶ Going further, it can be said that resettlement was the CRC’s way of providing post-internment welfare by trying to provide Japanese Americans with jobs and housing when their economic situation was dismal at best. What it boiled down to was that the Issei and Nisei in Chicago had to rely on each other to create a new, thriving community unlike anything they had experience on the West Coast or in the camps.

Members of the CRC also examined the issue of having a “strong and influential Japanese American newspaper” in Chicago. The *Chicago Shimpo* emerged around the same time as the CRC, yet out of the roughly 20,000 resettlers in 1947, its circulation reached only 1,100. Compared to the West Coast, specifically Los Angeles, “the need for such an organ is unquestioned, even taken for granted. The 27,000 returnees there are supporting three full-size newspapers, with a circulation of over 12,000.”³⁷ The CRC was also quick to point out the

³⁶ “Twilight of a Generation: On the Welfare Problems of the Issei in Illinois.” Compiled by the editors of *Scene* from various articles and data. *Pictorial Guidebook and Directory: 1952* (Chicago, IL: 1952). JASC Legacy Center Archives, 41.

³⁷ Chicago Resettlers Committee, *Progress Report: 1947* (Chicago, IL: 1947). Miscellaneous pamphlets on Japanese in Chicago. Chicago Historical Society, pg. 4.

difference between the West Coast and Chicago, with the West Coast promoting racial solidarity and clustering and Chicago advocating “the outward movement of the Nisei into on-going Chicago activities.”³⁸ Clearly the CRC and the *Chicago Shimpō* saw their efforts as beneficial in that they promoted a close Japanese American community that identified with the city of Chicago as opposed to the stigma of being easily grouped into ethnic neighborhoods like on the West Coast.

Another important aspect of the CRC’s mission was to promote social cohesion by providing social-recreational activities for the Japanese American community. The first real steps were taken when the CRC convinced Abe Hagiwara, an older Nisei man from Cleveland, to take a position in Chicago. Hagiwara was born on December 13, 1918 in Washington state and graduated from high school in Alaska in 1936. He was evacuated to the Puyallup Assembly Center and interned in Minidoka; in both places, he served as recreational director for young Nisei. Soon after his release he obtained a Bachelor of Arts from Penn College in 1946 and pursued graduate work at Western Reserve University in Cleveland, where he studied sociology. Hagiwara was an active member of the YMCA in Cleveland and worked specifically as the Secretary for Boys’ Work, but he also volunteered recreational services for the JACL, the Cleveland Resettlement Committee, and the Cleveland Nisei Athletic Association.³⁹

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Chicago Resettlers Committee, “Personal Data: Abe Hagiwara, April 5, 1947” (Chicago, IL: 1947). Miscellaneous Pamphlets on Japanese in Chicago, Chicago Historical Society. For a fascinating account of how Hagiwara’s efforts related to the issue of delinquency and youth in Chicago’s Japanese American community, see Ellen Wu’s essay “Zoot Suiting, Swing Dancing, and Ball Playing: Nisei Leisure and Citizenship in Chicago, 1943-1953” (Unpublished Seminar Paper: University of Chicago, 24 March 2000). JASC Legacy Center

The CRC recognized Hagiwara's qualifications, and convinced him to head up its recreation efforts in Chicago in 1947. According to historian Ellen Wu, "one of his primary duties as the CRC recreation director was the formation of an autonomous Citywide Committee on Recreation to develop a host of activities in different neighborhoods throughout Chicago."⁴⁰ Among the activities planned were folk dancing, community singing, social dancing, cards, board games, and swimming. To encourage participation in these programs, the CRC worked with the Coordination Committee on Welfare Services to Japanese Americans, which was part of Chicago's Council of Social Agencies, as well as the Japanese American Council.⁴¹ Although it was a Japanese American organization, it still relied on community and social welfare agencies for funding and structure, as well as mainstream models of recreation to achieve a sense of balance between their Japanese heritage and their American identity and upbringing.⁴²

Archives. Wu's research was an inspiration that led to my discovery of Hagiwara's role in Chicago and Cleveland.

⁴⁰ Wu, "Zoot Suiting," pg. 35.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pgs. 33-34, 36. Also see Social Analysis Committee of the Chicago Resettlers Committee. "Chicago Resettlement 1947: A Report," JASC Legacy Center Archives, for primary source information.

⁴² See Shirley Jennifer Lim, *A Feeling of Belonging: Asian American Women's Public Culture, 1930-1960* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), for an in-depth treatment of popular consumer and recreational culture among Asian American women during this period. Chapter Three deals with the Chicago Japanese American magazine *Scene* as an ethnic publication that encouraged what she calls "democratic liberalism," and states in her argument that mainstream markets did not cater to Asian Americans, which may explain the absence of wide-spread reporting on Japanese American resettlement. Going beyond Lim's arguments, I have examined mainstream and Japanese newspapers in Chicago to articulate the kinds of stories about Japanese American were being published, and how they worked to form a unique urban Midwestern Japanese American culture.

By 1950, the recreation program was seen as having reached its full potential, and it dropped sponsorship of many activities it had initiated. It did, however, continue to encourage independent leadership/volunteers to carry out programs where they still might be needed. This change corresponded to Hagiwara's move in the ranks of the CRC to associate director in late 1949.⁴³ Also, at least a dozen members of the Nisei leadership became members of important boards in the larger community, including the Council of Social Agencies and the Community Fund. Thus, these recreation-social activities remained a vested interest to transform Japanese Americans into "an integral part of the Chicago citizenry."⁴⁴

One aspect of Japanese American life that went largely unreported was the difficulties Japanese Americans encountered in housing. It was thought among CRC representatives and the community it represented that a large number of resettlers were being segregated into specific neighborhoods in the city. According to a 1947 report, roughly eighty percent of all Chicago Japanese Americans resided in one of the four following areas: 1. Lower Northside, centered around Clark and Division Streets; 2. Oakland-Kenwood; 3. Far Northside; and 4. Hyde Park-Woodlawn. This was a major concern because the purpose of resettlement was always promoted as the diffusion of the Japanese American population in order to prevent the formation of "Little Tokyos." The CRC felt that the crystallization of these neighborhood boundaries would limit the economic and social mobility of Japanese American resettlers to the extent that crime,

⁴³ Nishi, "Restoration of Community in Chicago Resettlement," pg. 10.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

delinquency, and increasing racial tensions would permeate their lives.⁴⁵

There were several reasons for this growing concentration in the Japanese American population. As stated earlier in this chapter, the city's wartime population experienced a boom because of the need for workers in war industries. This boom made housing less available. These four particular neighborhoods represented "areas of accessibility" for Japanese resettlers. Rents were affordable, and real estate agents, both Japanese and Caucasian, encouraged resettlers to go into these areas. The Committee was quick to mention that non-resettler-owned real estate agencies would actively promote housing in Oakland-Kenwood and the Lower Northside, yet "politely decline inquiries about property in more desirable residential areas."⁴⁶ Another important element was the fact that many racially restrictive covenants did not extend to these areas; thus the overwhelming majority of tenants were lower-class and predominantly black. On the whole these were not perceived to be ideal conditions for long-term resettlement.

In particular, the Oakland-Kenwood neighborhood received a fair amount of criticism from Japanese community leaders as the greatest area of concern. This region of the city was bordered from the north and south at 43rd and 47th Streets, respectively, and to the east and west by Oakenwald and Ellis Avenue. As of 1951, it was reported that 153 Japanese American homeowners resided in this South Side neighborhood, more than any single location in Cook County. With its lack of community conservation and urban re-development, Oakland-

⁴⁵ Chicago Resettlers Committee, *Progress Report: 1947* (Chicago, IL: 1947). Miscellaneous pamphlets on Japanese in Chicago. Chicago Historical Society, 1. Neighborhood concentration and stratification are often cited in many of the scholars who have studied resettlement in Chicago. See Michael Albert, "Japanese American Communities in Chicago and the Twin Cities," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1980.

⁴⁶ "Progress Report: 1947," 2.

Kenwood became a deteriorating “area of transition,” where many black families moved into the numerous one-room apartments and kitchenettes in place of the departing white community. The response by longtime residents and the CRC leadership was to form a civic group called the Oakland Kenwood Planning Association, which would act as a facilitator to promote cordial intergroup relations and encounters.⁴⁷

Despite these outreach efforts, the trend among Japanese families in this area was to seek out more “desirable” living conditions, just as the whites had done by moving to the suburbs. As in most communities where demographic and ethnic change is highly visible, rumors spread among the Japanese community about assaults, attempted burglaries, and even cases of rape taking place in the area. Setsuko Matsunaga Nishi recounts an incident involving her son, who had been invited to a birthday party given by a black child, but returned home early because he was the only Japanese child who showed up to attend. She suspected that many of the Japanese children in the neighborhood were not allowed to play with the other black children. Conversely, the same black child was invited to her son’s birthday party, where he was the only black child and made to feel uncomfortable by some of the other Sansei children.⁴⁸ This made it difficult for the agencies to begin preparing residents to live comfortably in a mixed community. Throughout the early 1950s, many Japanese Americans continued their outward move to the suburbs of Chicago. Housing requests dropped by 18 percent in 1950-1951, presumably because there were

⁴⁷ Chicago Resettlers Committee, *Progress Report: 1951*. Miscellaneous pamphlets on Japanese in Chicago, Chicago Historical Society Archives, 2.

⁴⁸ Chicago Resettlers Committee, “Community Relations Committee Meeting: October 26, 1951” Welfare Council Records: Box 285, Folder 7, Chicago Historical Society Archives. Paraphrased from the report.

fewer Japanese moving to the city, and job referrals decreased even further by 36 percent from the previous year.⁴⁹

Social and recreational activities continued to be popular, but they were no longer under the auspices of the CRC and emerged as more independent functions, drawing many older Chicago Japanese who resided within the city limits. The post-war economy helped establish many Japanese Nisei as professional, white-collar workers ascending the ranks of the middle class, yet the Issei still owned many small businesses of their own. Nevertheless, the work of the CRC changed from the tasks of initial resettlement of Nisei and Issei alike, to the more permanently focused efforts of caring for those older citizens in need of their social services. Almost as if to reflect this transition, the CRC renamed itself the Japanese American Service Committee in the mid-1950s.⁵⁰

In the years immediately following the war, the *Chicago Shimpō* reported on stories that affected the Japanese American community through the lens of the CRC. A number of these articles appeared between the formative years of 1949 and 1953, after many Japanese Americans decided to return to the West Coast. This migration left those resettlers who made the conscious decision to make Chicago their permanent home, thus making sure to focus on the Japanese American community itself. Many of these stories focused on recreation-social activities, and

⁴⁹ Chicago Resettlers Committee, *Progress Report: 1950*, Record Group 9: Series 1, Folder 5, JASC Legacy Center Archives, page 6.

⁵⁰ The CRC changed its name to the Japanese American Service Committee in 1954: Debbie Mieko Burns, JASC Archivist, and Karen Kanemoto, *Securing Our Legacy: Understanding Japanese American Resettlement in the Midwest*. Access date unknown. <<http://www.archives.gov/nhprc/annotation/june-2002/japanese-american-resettlement.html>>.

even the most seemingly minute events were documented. The *Chicago Shimpō* made a point to report on a group of children sponsored by the CRC attending a summer creative arts camp “that will better equip them for everyday group experience at home and in their neighborhood.”⁵¹

Another article emphasized the English and Japanese classes offered by the CRC in its offices for both Issei and Nisei, a kind of signifying activity that promoted their American and Japanese roots, as well as equal opportunity between generations that would grow stronger in the coming years with the Walter-McCarren Act making Issei American citizens.⁵² Children and families garnered attention in this newspaper because, like any close-knit community, they were the foundation upon which their future success in Chicago was built.

Some of these same articles were quick to point out that the CRC was a departure point from the government-run WRA resettlement program. An editorial by Fujii honoring one of the first presidents of the CRC, Henry Mayeda, proclaims that “the CRC is not an organization which took over the work when the WRA was dissolved (in 1946). It is an organization born out of the initiative of Japanese Americans who had relocated to Chicago.”⁵³ Such initiative could only be possible in a city like Chicago, where the social cohesion of the largest Japanese American community at that time prevailed over the challenges of early resettlement and, to a

⁵¹ “CRC to Send 16 Children to Camp” (*Chicago Shimpō*: July 13, 1949), Located in the JASC Scrapbook collection, JASC Legacy Center Archives.

⁵² “Solid American citizens are being trained in a modest, old three-story house at 1110 N. LaSalle St” (*Chicago Shimpō*: April 3 1950). JASC Scrapbook collection: 1948-1951, JASC Legacy Center Archives

⁵³ Ryoichi Fujii, “Editorial” (*Chicago Shimpō*: January 13, 1950). Located in the JASC Scrapbook Collection: 1948-1951, JASC Legacy Center Archives.

greater degree, the pre-war problems they faced on the West Coast. Fujii's take on the CRC and WRA is essential in that it places just as much weight on the former as a model for Japanese American ownership over community and social needs as the latter did with employment and housing. However, as it will be described later, the CRC also provided services in finding jobs and homes for Japanese Americans, but in a more indirect fashion. This interpretation is different from that of scholars like Brooks, whose argument is that the CRC was a Japanese American organization that mainly fulfilled neglected social welfare services. Among the more widely-circulated newspapers during these same years, larger community events were often the only ones noted. The *Chicago Sun-Times* documented the annual Japanese American picnic in Hyde Park, which at the time was their biggest gathering event of the year. What is most interesting about the article is its near insistence on the inter-cultural mixing aspect of the picnic, which is described in the following quote:

East will meet and mingle with West in a lively picnic Sunday...(at) Dan Ryan Woods at 87th and Western. In embroidered kimonos, they will do slow, graceful native dances to Oriental stringed instruments. And then they will switch to fiddles and swing their partners in square dancing...⁵⁴

An article in the *Chicago Tribune* documented a smaller scale event, a cultural study put on by the CRC and other social workers that featured a speaker, Dr. Charlotte Babcock, who "is known among Japanese Americans for her part in the inter-disciplinary study of acculturation and the

⁵⁴ "4000 Nisei Expected to Gather For Picnic" (*Chicago Sun-Times*, July 7 1952), Located in the JASC Scrapbook Collection, 1950-1959. JASC Legacy Center Archives.

Japanese American personality.”⁵⁵ These accounts from the mainstream, predominantly white media subtly reflect the reciprocity between the Japanese American efforts to adapt and assimilate into mainstream American culture in Chicago and how the community at large accepted and actively encouraged these practices.

Other stories in the *Chicago Shimpō* also argued that similar social service organizations were not suited to serve the Japanese American community most directly. In what was originally a *New York Times* article re-published in the *Shimpō*, the director of the CRC, Jack Yasutake, defines those organizations by a lack of “white-collar workers in the community to meet the demands for Japanese American services.”⁵⁶ By using the term “white-collar workers,” Yasutake implies that these needs extend beyond the church and social welfare agencies that had served resettlement both during and after the war. More succinctly, it indicates exactly what the term means, those mainstream workers in banking, commerce, real estate, etc., who he felt did not provide enough direct attention to the needs of the Japanese American people living in Chicago. This statement also carries weight when considering the fact that Japanese Americans, especially in the Midwest, had to look to each other for support while not reverting back to the “Little Tokyos” of the West Coast. The CRC, on the other hand, was an organization that catered to these needs by providing assistance in housing referrals, job postings, and legal services, among other things. It also understood what internment and resettlement had brought

⁵⁵ “Chicago Nisei Social Workers Organize Culture Study Group” (*Chicago Tribune*, March 17, 1952). Located in the JASC Scrapbook Collection, 1950-1959, JASC Legacy Center Archives.

⁵⁶ Special Article from the *New York Times*, 1950, “Highlights of director Jack Yasutake” (Re-published in *Chicago Shimpō*, exact date unknown). Located in the JASC Scrapbook Collection: 1948-1951, JASC Legacy Center Archives.

the Japanese Americans, and the challenges they faced in forming a community.

One of the most significant events for Japanese Americans during the post-war years was the passage of the Walter-McCarren Act in December 1952. This piece of legislation established larger quotas for Japanese immigration, but more importantly it allowed Issei to become American citizens when before they had been unable to obtain citizenship. The significance of this law was not lost on the Chicago Japanese press, and efforts to promote the success of Issei citizenship made their way to its pages. A month after the successful passage of the Act, the CRC in partnership with the Chicago JACL sponsored a “naturalization program” for Issei who were advanced enough in the Americanization Program to expedite the citizenship process.⁵⁷ This marks a significant collaboration between two Japanese American groups working for one of the largest constituencies of Japanese Americans in the United States.⁵⁸ The fact that the program focused on the Issei demonstrates an attempt at bridging the generational gap that had been fostered in the internment camps, as well as the early resettlement when the WRA favored the Nisei as model citizens, something that was inherent in the Midwestern Japanese American population as a whole.

To demonstrate the important of this legislation, one article proudly states that 93 Issei in Chicago were among the first to be granted citizenship. One of those individuals was Jack Yasutake, former director of the CRC, who was congratulated specifically by Representative

⁵⁷ “Citizenship Program to Aid Chicago Issei” (*Chicago Shimpo*: January 29, 1953). Located in the JASC Scrapbook Collection, 1950-1959. JASC Legacy Center Archives.

⁵⁸ Not much else can be said at this juncture about the relationship between the Chicago Resettlers Committee and the city’s JACL. This relationship is also another departure point for future research.

Barratt O'Hara. Speaking about Japanese Americans in Chicago in front of Congress, part of O'Hara's speech was reproduced in the *Chicago Shimpō*:

I am informed that there are more Japanese Americans in the 2nd District (which includes Chicago) than in any other Congressional district in the United States. For the most part, they (the Nisei) are native-born Americans, educated in American schools and colleges, cultured, kindly, ardently patriotic. Yet their parents never until now were accorded the right of becoming citizens...I congratulate Yasutake, at long last an American citizen.⁵⁹

Such a tribute is fitting, as the CRC's efforts to build and sustain a Japanese American community in the post-war years was celebrated with the cultural and political victory of the Issei becoming citizens. The WRA had established its resettlement program in Chicago with the understanding that it would oversee the most basic needs of the resettlers, i.e. employment, housing, placement, etc., with some input and support from local social service agencies. As such, its control was so far-reaching that there was very little room for Japanese American perspectives on what they felt to be most important to their situation. With the WRA completely dismantled by 1946, it was up to the Japanese American leadership to not only continue the charge in resettlement with the CRC, but also expand it a model of ethnic self-ownership unlike any organization that had served them before. Coinciding with the creation of a Japanese American press with the *Chicago Shimpō*, this Japanese American agency would work solely on behalf of the ethnic community to which they belonged to achieve social cohesion, while committing to the view that these endeavors would demonstrate that the Japanese Americans were also members of a greater Chicago, and consequently Midwestern, community.

⁵⁹ "1st Japanese in Chicago Made U.S. Citizen" (*Chicago Shimpō*: March 10, 1953). Located in the JASC Scrapbook Collection, 1950-1959. JASC Legacy Center Archives. Yasutake would pass away two weeks after receiving his citizenship, on March 30, 1953.

Chapter 3: Cleveland Resettlement

In 1955, members of the Cleveland Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) sponsored a group of young, second- and third-generation girls to become the “PR backbone” of their organization. This group was known as the Sho Jo Ji Dancers, and their primary function was to preserve traditional Japanese dance and song within Cleveland’s Japanese American community. Its first performance was in 1956 as a part of the Chrysanthemum Festival held at the Cleveland Public Library. The director of the library asked Mrs. Vi Takahashi, who had been a professional dancer in Japan, to organize and instruct the group. Ultimately, there were six original dancers, aged eight through thirteen. All of them were third-generation Sansei, and none of them spoke Japanese or had visited the homeland.¹ Ironically, these girls would become the focal point after the war by which Clevelanders were introduced to the Japanese culture and aspects of Japanese life.

From the mid-1950s through the early 1960s, the Sho Jo Ji Dancers performed at many local community functions in Cleveland as the main public relations component of the JACL. In addition to various civic, educational, and veterans’ organization functions, the group appeared on public television programs in order to increase its exposure. By 1962, it was believed that the girls had performed their traditional Japanese dances and folk tales to over 30,000 residents in and around Cleveland. However, there were concerns from several Cleveland Japanese over

¹ “Cleveland JACL, 1960: A Report.” Henry Tanaka Papers: Container 2, Folder 8. Located in the Western Reserve Historical Society Archives. Stephen S. Fujita. “Japanese,” (Encyclopedia of Cleveland History Online, 1997), <http://ech.cwru.edu/ech-cgi/article.pl?id=J>. Access date unknown.

how the Dancers portrayed Japanese culture, and how that portrayal might reflect on the Japanese American citizens who had resettled to Cleveland. Fears were expressed about the dancers being “too Japanese” by community representatives in the JACL, who felt that they spoke to some degree for the greater Japanese American population. This questioning is expressed in the minutes of one meeting in 1960. “Does it distort the image of Japanese Americans? Does it denote a greater tie with our cultural heritage than is actually the case?”² Why was this cause for concern, and how did the Japanese American community in Cleveland get to this level of social and cultural integration when, only fifteen years earlier, it was still in the process of resettling from the camps and rebuilding their lives? More importantly, to what extent did this community form even though Cleveland’s resettlement agency dissolved shortly after the war, and how did that allow for such programs as the Sho Jo Ji dancers?

This chapter focuses on Cleveland resettlement by looking at its coverage, or lack thereof, in one mainstream newspaper, the *Cleveland Press*, and its community agency, the Cleveland Resettlement Committee (CRC).³ Many newspaper articles that talk about the Japanese American experience during the war were broad, national reflections of internment and the war, with minimal coverage given to Cleveland resettlement itself. Because Cleveland’s Japanese American population did not reach the heights of other cities like Chicago, it was not given the attention in the mainstream media. Nor was it large enough to sustain a Japanese

² “Cleveland JACL, 1960: A Report.” Henry Tanaka Papers: Container 2, Folder 8. Western Reserve Historical Society Archives.

³ I also include some articles from the *Cleveland Plain-Dealer* that were cited in secondary works, but my primary focus is on the *Cleveland Press* because it was the lesser-known, more locally focused newspaper in Cleveland.

American newspaper. Consequently, their CRC was founded several years earlier than Chicago's agency, but was not led by Japanese Americans. Rather, its leadership was mostly white business and community leaders in Cleveland, which also explains why the organization did not last past the war and was absorbed in 1946. Nevertheless, this small Japanese American community in Cleveland found success similar to Chicago's population, and later had a Japanese American Citizens' League (JACL) that served their local and national interests in the post-war era.

Cleveland's role in resettlement was different from that of Chicago's in its early stages because of its restrictions on student resettlement. Western Reserve University, now known as Case Western Reserve, received an inquiring questionnaire from the National Japanese American Student Relocation Council in spring of 1942 on whether or not the university would be able to accommodate Japanese students. The response was a hesitant one, and the university's vice president, W.G. Simon, was quick to explain:

In general, we believe that these Japanese students would be happier in universities located in small towns rather than one located in a big city. There are practically no Japanese in Cleveland and a Japanese student here would feel constantly conspicuous. We do sympathize with them in their embarrassment in these terrible times and will do everything to make a student coming here comfortable...⁴

However, the university decided to bar resettled students by October 1942, citing "unfriendly public opinion." This gesture is ironic in light of Chicago's largely receptive response because

⁴ Austin, "From Concentration Camps to Campus," pgs. 142-143. The ideas expressed at the end of the page are common arguments in many of the secondary sources on Chicago resettlement.

the lack of a Japanese population before the war was what made Chicago's resettlement possible in the first place.

Despite this early action, Cleveland as a location for resettlement was natural because of its proximity to other major Midwestern cities. The WRA established its Great Lakes Area headquarters there, and this office included major cities like Cincinnati, Columbus, Dayton, and Pittsburgh. In terms of resettlement population, Chicago was the most concentrated destination, but Cleveland had a significant cross-section of Japanese as well. Close to 3,100 Japanese Americans are believed to have resettled in Cleveland at its peak in early 1946. This made Cleveland the third most-popular city for resettlement behind Chicago and Denver, which had about 3,124 Japanese Americans.⁵ The most logical explanation for this popularity, as well as the WRA's decision to center its Great Lakes offices in the city, is that Cleveland was a growing city both during and after the war in terms of both job opportunities and population.

The treatment of Japanese American resettlement to Cleveland by historians is sparse at best. Thomas Linehan, a long-time professor of English at Oberlin College, wrote an essay entitled "Japanese American Resettlement in Cleveland During and After World War II," specifically dealing with the aforementioned topic.⁶ He begins with a brief overview of

⁵ Thomas Linehan, "Japanese American Resettlement in Cleveland During and After World War II." *Journal of Urban History* 20 (1993): 1, 54-80, especially pg 57. Linehan's work is the most comprehensive scholarly examination of Japanese American resettlement in Cleveland to date, as there is no major book-length text on the subject.

⁶ This information was obtained from the Oberlin Alumni Magazine, Vol. 92, No. 2: Fall 2000. http://www.oberlin.edu/alummag/oamcurrent/oam_fall_00/losses03.html. Access date unknown. Linehan was educated as an undergraduate at Loyola University in Chicago, and completed his graduate work at the University of Chicago. Before arriving in the English department of Oberlin in 1971, he taught at Northern Illinois University. His professional interests were concentrated in eighteenth and nineteenth-century literature, which included

internment that gives some broader context to the issue of resettlement. In describing how the WRA viewed its role in resettlement, Linehan states that “(they) saw one of its main functions as permanently resettling as many Japanese Americans as possible...”⁷ Therefore, this ethnic dispersal, according to Linehan, was seen as “an instrument of permanent social change” and “as one Cleveland WRA official wrote, a ‘partial attempt to repair the serious damage’ of relocation.”⁸ It is important to understand that the author sees resettlement as a kind of social experiment in which this kind of population diffusion was a primary way to assimilate the Japanese American people into mainstream society.

As his narrative progresses, Linehan examines the city of Cleveland and its resettlement efforts in greater detail. He uses the example of the Cleveland Resettlement Committee, or CRC, as the most essential local organization through which resettlers could find information on employment, housing, and other various social services. In fact, the idea of Cleveland as a highly coordinated city in terms of its social service agencies is crucial to Linehan because it explains why Cleveland was so successful at accommodating the Japanese American resettlers. Not only was it the responsibility of the CRC, but other agencies like the YMCA, YWCA, and local churches were involved as well. He also illuminates a number of local examples of community interaction, as well as the relationship between these agencies and the Japanese

publications on such writers as Dickens and Shakespeare. He later became interested in the plight of poorer individuals caught in the meshes of the legal system, which gives a good indication as to why he became interested in studying internment and resettlement. He passed away in 1999 at the age of 62.

⁷ Linehan, “Japanese American Resettlement in Cleveland,” pg. 54

⁸ *Ibid.*, pg. 55

Americans, in a chronology that leads up to the CRC's eventual demise with the end of the war in 1946.

In terms of primary research, Linehan does a fine job of uncovering agency documents from that period and using them to illustrate his arguments. He makes extensive use of records at both local and national archives, the former being the Federation for Community Planning records at the Western Reserve Historical Society, and the latter being the National Archives in Washington D.C. He also uses several prominent secondary works from internment scholars, such as Roger Daniels and Michi Weglyn, to make a well-rounded argument about resettlement in general. However, the meat of Linehan's work lies in the local documents, especially when reflecting on the difficulties that the Japanese Americans faced in resettling to Cleveland. For example, Linehan discusses a public controversy reported in the local press over the severe housing shortage in the city in relation to Japanese resettlers. This case study is especially interesting considering the range of people involved, from community leaders on the Real Estate Board, to important WRA officials who responded by defending the Japanese American presence, and thus their cause.

The primary shortcomings of Linehan's work stem from the fact that he does not establish a clear thesis statement. He emphasizes resettlement as a socio-political move by the federal government to encourage assimilation and integration, and does a commendable job of highlighting instances that are pertinent to Cleveland, such as the seemingly consistent promotion of the 442nd Nisei Combat squad by resettlement agencies as the highest example of Japanese American patriotism. However, the essay works more as a broad description of Cleveland resettlement than an argument about anything specific to this process. Although it

describes the CRC fairly thoroughly, there are other perspectives that can be taken into account. A more in-depth look at the local press coverage as it related to Japanese resettlement would be a fine extension of this topic.

To carry out this extension, I have examined articles from Cleveland's two largest newspapers, the *Cleveland Plain-Dealer* and the *Cleveland Press*, that were directly and indirectly linked to resettlement. These articles are not only geared specifically toward resettlement, but also reveal local and national sentiments about Japanese Americans through their coverage of internment and the war. Also, I have made use of other primary documents related to the CRC and other community agencies located in the Western Reserve Historical Society Archives. Overall, there was a clear distinction between the Cleveland press and its emphasis on broader, more national aspects of the Japanese American experience, and how the community resettlement agencies chose low-key, oftentimes less public forms of social interaction to promote their success, which resulted in a lack of Japanese American leadership and a program that did not adjust to serve Japanese Americans in Cleveland after the war.

Resettlement in Cleveland can be traced to the origins of the CRC. On December 3, 1942, a meeting was set up by George Rundquist in Cleveland to discuss how the city could accept Japanese Americans. At this meeting were representatives from various religious and social service-oriented groups, all of whom had some benevolent interest in the program. Specifically, the War Relocation Authority was mentioned as a partner through which the community could cooperate "in assimilating the Japanese-Americans who were leaving the

evacuation camps and trying to find their place in new communities.”⁹ There were three major groups at this meeting: the Cleveland Welfare Federation, Cleveland Church Federation, and the International Institute. All decided that the power of a resettlement agency should not rest with one of their organizations, but rather that a separate “citizens’ committee” should be formed instead.¹⁰

The decision was made to create a semi-autonomous body that would be financially supported by these social-service organizations and their own fund-raising endeavors. On January 13, 1943, a formal proposal to create the CRC was passed by a “wide representation from various community interests.”¹¹ These interests included active church groups from the First Methodist and First Unitarian Church, as well as social agencies like the Salvation Army, the Jewish Social Services Bureau, and Catholic Charities.¹² Such a cross-section of cultural, ethnic, and social organizations indicates a strong link between the agencies themselves, as well as a similar perspective on resettlement as a charitable and social endeavor. However, it was marked by the noticeable absence of Japanese American interests as a voice in how resettlement in Cleveland should take place.

⁹ Cleveland Resettlement Committee, “Letter from George Trundle, Jr. To Mr. Edward D. Lynde, Executive Secretary of the Cleveland Welfare Federation” (Cleveland, OH: June 22, 1945). Federation for Community Planning: 1913-1974, Container 16, Folder 389. Western Reserve Historical Society Archives, pg 1. Also see Linehan, “Japanese American Resettlement,” pg. 57, for an argument on how Rundquist stressed to this group that many Japanese Americans were citizens in order to expedite the process.

¹⁰ Linehan, “Japanese American Resettlement,” pg. 57.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*, pg. 58

How did the mainstream press in Cleveland react to these efforts? A sampling of articles published by the *Cleveland Press* both during and immediately after the war indicates a minimal amount of coverage explicitly about resettlement. Many stories in 1942 dealt with the local and national war effort, and talked about the “enemy” Japanese as “Japs” in the major headlines. Daily reports on military action in the Pacific were quick to mention success in captions such as “U.S. Subs Sink 7 Jap Ships” or “3 Japs Seized at Border,” the latter about a group of Japanese nationals being captured by the military at the U.S.-Mexican border.¹³ In many of these war-related articles, the term “Japanese” or “Japanese Americans” was used instead of Jap, which marks a clear distinction between actual Japanese combatants and Japanese American citizens. However, while the former was painted as the enemy, the status of the interned Japanese was ambiguous, if not neglected altogether.

This specific coverage of Japanese as enemy soldiers does not mean that Japanese Americans were absent from the *Press*'s stories. In fact, as early as November 1942 a story was printed about the local YMCA and the domestic issue of resettlement. A meeting of the 98th national convention of the YMCA was held in Cleveland at Hotel Statler, and at this meeting members discussed a range of topics related to community assistance at home. One item that was specifically addressed was how they could assist in “the graduate assimilation of Japanese evacuees into American communities as quickly as their loyalty to this country is verified.” Also included in the report was a discussion of how the YMCA representatives pledged monetary

¹³ “3 Japs Seized at Border,” “U.S. Subs Sink 7 Jap Ships” (*Cleveland Press*: November 2, 1942, Issue 20422). Ohio Historical Society Archives: N410, Vol. 285.

donations to the WRA “and other such agencies” interested in resettlement.¹⁴ This rare instance of publicity on resettlement’s early mobilization reveals a link between the federal WRA and a significant local agency, the YMCA.

Indeed, the Cleveland YMCA was a benchmark organization that represented community and social values, but it was not the only one. A number of local stories during the war period focus on social service organizations and the issues they dealt with in the city, ranging from juvenile delinquency to everyday problems facing social workers. Meetings between individuals in these organizations were common, and some were documented. “Ahead of us lies the greatest job of all time - reconstruction,” reads one excerpt from a meeting of social workers in Cleveland, at which representatives from the Welfare Federation (which helped fund the CRC) were present.¹⁵ Again, this concern over what would happen after the war came to the surface and, although it was not mentioned, Japanese American resettlement was one major facet of domestic aid.

Delinquency was also a concern of these agencies. Across the nation, the war had created a domestic void due in large part to labor shortages and the opportunity for women to find wartime employment outside the home. This led to widespread fear among community members, especially in Cleveland, that older, teenage children without parental supervision would cause trouble, and thus spur an increase in the crime rate. As if to counteract this negative perception, the agencies worked hard to find social outlets for children and young adults. The

¹⁴ “YMCA Pledges Home Front Aid at Sessions End” (*Cleveland Press*: November 2, 1942, Issue 20422). Ohio Historical Society Archives: N410, Vol. 285.

¹⁵ “Social Workers to Meet Monday” (*Cleveland Press*: November 3, 1942). Ohio Historical Society Archives: N410, Vol. 285.

YMCA started to host co-ed dances in their branches across the city, and for a nominal fee offered membership in their sports clubs and recreation groups.¹⁶ Combined with “the efficiency of the Community Fund agencies dealing with child care,” Cleveland experienced a 2 percent decline in the number of delinquency cases reported, and it was proudly stated that other, larger cities experienced an increase during the same period. This relative stability is important when placed in the context of resettlement, as many early resettlers were younger Nisei who were susceptible to delinquency. Community delinquency is an aspect that cannot be ignored as a factor in Cleveland’s early resettlement program because it relates to the more explicit concerns among Japanese Americans in Chicago about youth culture, as well as the larger national implications it posed on post-war society on how to deal with the issue.

Many of the agencies featured were in fact involved with Japanese American resettlement, a detail that is missing from these same newspaper articles. A perfect example of this can be found in a *Cleveland Press* editorial, written by columnist Dilworth Lupton, in which he praises the efforts of two church groups, the Welfare Federation of Cleveland and the Federation of Churches. Both are mentioned as entities that “break down the prejudice of Jews, Catholics, and Protestants toward one another through their collaboration in the various social agencies of the city.” Some of their noted activities include building cross-denominational churches in Cleveland, working with the Court of Common Pleas to reduce the divorce rate, and youth outreach.¹⁸ The editorial mentioned that both groups work to solve “greater social

¹⁶ Editorial on merits of YMCA, title unknown (*Cleveland Press*: December 2, 1946). Ohio Historical Society Archives: N410, Vol. 309.

¹⁸ Dilworth Lupton editorial, “Cleveland Churches Pioneer” (*Cleveland Press*: November 18, 1946). Ohio Historical Society Archives: N410, Vol. 309.

problems” like poverty and racism, but conspicuously neglected to mention that both organizations provided the funds and support for resettlement that materialized into the CRC several years earlier. Although there is no way of knowing why this piece of information is not included, this absence speaks to the fact that resettlement was not meant to be a high-profile project of the federal government, but rather a coordinated effort in which these private social service agencies took the lead.

Even more telling is the fact that other articles in which Japanese American resettlement is discussed are elementary and do not go into details. A story from April 1943 talks about two Japanese American women, interned at Heart Mountain, who were cleared for work at the Cleveland Public Library. According to the details of the article, both women were certified as teachers and had training in clerical work, which explains why they were qualified for these jobs.¹⁹ However, there is no description of how these women were able to gain clearance, much less the efforts of the CRC and possibly other agencies that would surely have given them assistance upon their arrival to Cleveland. Another brief story describes how Harold Ickes, then Secretary of the Interior, hired seven Japanese American to work at his estate in Ilney, Maryland, but the only allusion to resettlement is that the WRA found it “in line with the government’s program of finding work for evacuees.”²⁰ The former is purely local, while the latter is of a more national interest, yet both represent important aspects of the resettlement experience that often

¹⁹ “Japanese Girls Acceptable to Library Staff” (*Cleveland Press*: April 22, 1943). Ohio Historical Society Archives: N410, Vol. 287.

²⁰ “Japanese Americans to Work on Ickes’ Farm” (*Cleveland Press*: April 15, 1943). Ohio Historical Society Archives: N410, Vol. 287.

went unreported because large public exposure went against the grain of the docile, low-key image that agencies like the WRA had constructed for the Japanese.

One of the most significant instances in which the Japanese American experience was documented in the *Cleveland Press* was a series of nationally-circulated editorials from Eleanor Roosevelt. In these particular editorials, she writes about her trip to the Gila River internment camp in Arizona, where she spent several days observing camp life. She prefaced the first editorial by acknowledging that many Americans have written her letters about the Japanese Americans being pampered by the government, seeing it as a form of guaranteed housing and welfare. Indeed, resettlement itself was feared as being seen as a type of welfare, but many community organizations emphasized the independent, successful nature of the Japanese Americans to counteract those criticisms. By writing in response to such harsh public opinion, she describes the industrious nature of the internees, saying that “there are several industries going on to aid the war effort.” She also goes on to add that “there is a great variety of backgrounds and a larger per cent of college graduates than is usual in a town of about 13,000 inhabitants.” What is interesting and ultimately not surprising about this description is that it came from Roosevelt herself, one of the most significant public relations figures in the country at that time.

The article shows how a cross-section of the public sentiment remained uncertain as to how Japanese American should be received upon resettlement. Venomous attacks on the Japanese people were still common in the press, as one column states that “many of them (Japanese Americans) are hateful, reptilian enemies of our country who would delight to do us

dirt if they could.”²¹ This attitude influenced the WRA’s decision to keep resettlement a slow-moving, quietly received process, as negative press was sure to threaten the reception of Japanese American resettlers to cities like Cleveland. Not only that, but national headlines about American POWs’s being executed by the Japanese forces continued to make the public uneasy. One local response by Larry Tajiri, a representative of the Japanese American Citizens’ League (JACL), condemned these actions by declaring it “a barbaric defiance of the Geneva Convention” and lambasted the Japanese imperial government for its actions.²² This response is significant because it comes from a Japanese American on behalf of a distinctly Japanese American organization with national ties, but on a broader scale it serves as a defense on behalf of all Japanese Americans.

During the CRC’s first few months, Henry Zucker was the body’s acting chairman, but his role was temporary. On March 26, 1943, Zucker called an organizational meeting to elect a more permanent chairmen to lead resettlement. The committee chose George Trundle, Jr., a local businessman, to head this important role in Cleveland resettlement.²³ A former consultant to the WRA, Trundle was well-suited for the position because of his favorable reputation in the community. He was the head of a nationally recognized engineering firm in Cleveland, with offices in New York and Chicago; thus his connections extended beyond the city to important

²¹ Westbrook Pegler editorial, “Fair Enough” (*Cleveland Press*: April 29, 1943). Ohio Historical Society Archives: N410, Vol. 287.

²² “Japanese Americans Condemn Executions” (*Cleveland Press*: April 23, 1943). Ohio Historical Society Archives: N410, Vol. 287.

²³ Cleveland Resettlement Committee, “Letter from George Trundle, Jr. To Mr. Edward D. Lynde, Executive Secretary of the Cleveland Welfare Federation,” pg. 1.

offices in New York and Chicago, thus his connections extended beyond the city to important urban centers in the East and Midwest.²⁴

Trundle also visited several of the camps in order to discuss Cleveland as a place for resettlement. He worked closely with WRA officials on how to assimilate the Japanese within the community he represented. During his tenure as CRC chairman, Trundle wrote letters of correspondence to camp officials, representatives of the WRA in Cleveland, and Japanese American resettlers. This type of networking was vital to the success of the CRC because it demonstrated the importance of effective communication between the professional agencies and the resettlers whom they ultimately served but did not promote into positions of leadership. Trundle led the independent CRC for more than three years until it was absorbed by the Welfare Federation of Cleveland in January 1946.²⁵

As a community figure, Trundle was featured in the local press after his service in the CRC. An article in the *Cleveland Press* talks about an appeal he made to area businessmen to quell their dissatisfaction about special interests in government and organized labor. His political beliefs are partially displayed as well. He was opposed to Wagner Act, a federal law that expanded the rights of workers to collectively bargain. This law was viewed negatively by many employers because of the power it gave to organized labor. Trundle also declared that “prosperity only comes from a high level of productivity,” which is limited by such things as subsidies and tax/unemployment relief.²⁶ This concern for business and industry in Cleveland articulates Trundle’s emphasis on the need for workers in the post-war economy, and Trundle’s

²⁴ Linehan, “Japanese American Resettlement,” pg. 58.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

efforts in resettling Japanese Americans were an important part of contributing to Cleveland's economic structure.

This article is revealing for several reasons. First, it addresses Trundle as a business figure and neglects his role as a community leader, specifically in resettlement. He is described only as CEO of the Trundle Engineering Company, which makes sense given the economic and political context of the article. However, because Trundle was arguably the most important figure in early Cleveland resettlement, this conspicuous lack of information is telling. Despite the fact that he was highly praised among those involved in the resettlement process, Trundle's obituary in Cleveland newspapers did not mention anything about his work with Japanese Americans.²⁷ Going a step further, it is reasonable to see this as a reflection of the larger absence of resettlement in the mainstream press.

A second important aspect of the article is that there is no indication of how resettlement may or may not have affected Trundle's politics. Although the article focuses on business and employment issues, it does not explain that one of Trundle's main goals in the CRC was to find suitable war-time work for resettlers, thereby filling the need for labor that Cleveland faced during the war. What is clear, however, is that Trundle the businessman did value productivity on a much larger scale, which may be indirectly linked to some of his resettlement efforts. According to Linehan, Trundle took it upon himself to employ a Japanese American couple on

²⁶ "Trundle Urges Political Parties to Work Together" (*The Cleveland Press*, November 19, 1946). Ohio Historical Society Newspaper Archives: N410, Vol. 309.

²⁷ Footnote from Linehan, "Japanese American Resettlement," pg. 77. Trundle passed away in 1954 at the age of 69, well after the CRC had been disbanded.

his farm in Cuyahoga County; the husband was a mechanical engineer.²⁸ It is not clear what the typical wages for these jobs were, but this isolated example of economic outreach combines Trundle's resettlement interests with a practical business approach to the situation.

It was the self-proclaimed mission of the CRC to meet two goals, the first of which was broad community acceptance. The second goal was to make the Japanese Americans feel secure by integrating them into "community life." To do this, the CRC made housing their first priority, and in June 1943 it established the Cleveland Hostel for resettlers, many of whom were younger, single Nisei.²⁹ Its funding came from religious organizations, primarily the Baptist Home Mission Society. According to Linehan, the Hostel was a "three-story, completely furnished house, just east of downtown Cleveland."³⁰ This location would have been ideal for resettlers looking for jobs in Cleveland's commercial and industrial sector, as many sought more permanent housing for their families.

The hostel was primarily operated by Max Franzen, a Quaker missionary who was also a conscientious objector. Because he did not enlist in military service, he and his wife were commissioned by the Mission Society to work in Cleveland for a small stipend.³¹ In his role as hostel director, Franzen gave detailed reports to George Pitt Beers, Executive Secretary of the American Baptist Home Mission Society, about the financial transactions of the Hostel. Not only that, but Franzen took it upon himself to mention the Japanese Americans who stayed temporarily, and were successful in finding employment and housing. In April 1945, two

²⁸ Linehan, "Japanese American Resettlement," pg. 67.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pg. 65.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pgs. 65-66.

months before the Hostel closed, Franzen advocated for an extension of the building's lease, that "operations should continue until the end of the year at which time the WRA has announced its intention to have the relocation centers closed."³² This concern reflects the historical reality of the situation, which was that more and more families were being resettled in 1945 to anticipate the closing of the camps. Despite his best efforts, Franzen was unable to secure funding, and the Hostel closed at the end of June.³³

Nevertheless, housing remained a priority for resettlers. Some Japanese Americans still requested temporary shelter from the Hostel upon release from the camps. For example, Kinhei Tanaka was interned in Topaz with his family, and requested that the WRA relocation office there send a wire requesting housing in Cleveland from Franzen. This request was submitted in May 1945, and at that point Franzen had already filled the Hostel's capacity for reservations. Franzen forwarded his information to the WRA and the CRC to see if they could provide any assistance. As a result, "Mr. Tanaka (has) decided to relocate alone first...He has written to a relocated friend in your city and has received a hospitality invitation."³⁴ This strategy of individuals establishing themselves before bringing their families was common, and it reflects the difficulties that the end of the war would bring for the resettlers, as well as the city of

³² Cleveland Resettlement Committee, "Letter of financial appeal from Max Franzen to Dr. George Pitts Beers, Executive Secretary of the American Baptist Home Mission" (Cleveland, OH: May 1, 1945). Federation for Community Planning Records: 1913-1974, Container 16, Folder 389. Western Reserve Historical Society Archives.

³³ Linehan, "Japanese American Resettlement," pg. 66.

³⁴ Cleveland Resettlement Committee, "Correspondence from Max Franzen and Dorothy Barber, head of the Cleveland WRA District Office" (Cleveland, Ohio: May-July 1945). Federation for Community Planning Records: 1913-1974, Container 16, Folder 391. Western Reserve Historical Society Archives.

Cleveland.

Throughout 1946, and in the years immediately following the war, there was an increase in the number of stories in the local press on housing shortages. Many of these reports focused on the concerns of veterans and where they would live after their service was completed. One story in the *Cleveland Press* talks about Chicago in the context of an “emergency housing program” for veterans that was ineffective because it did not have enough family-sized units.³⁵ In the same issue, Ed Gavin, editor of *American Builder Magazine*, took an opposing view towards housing priority for veterans at the Ohio Home Builders Convention in Cleveland. According to the article, Gavin felt that this distinction constituted veterans as “a special class” and that housing should be based on financial ability.³⁶ Although these examples are not specifically related to the Japanese American experience, they reveal to some extent a greater national debate about the problems of urban housing after the war, as well as a connection between Chicago and Cleveland in their concerns over housing.

However, there was some controversy over this issue in relation to Japanese American resettlement in Cleveland. The Cleveland Real Estate Board, a group of realtors that favored veterans over Japanese Americans, agreed to send letters to Ohio politicians that specifically singled out “the unfortunate insistence of the WRA who are seeking living accommodations

³⁵ Story on Chicago and veteran housing, no title (*The Cleveland Press*, November 21, 1946). Ohio Historical Society Newspaper Archives: N410, Vol. 309.

³⁶ “Building Editor Hits Vet Housing Problem” (*The Cleveland Press*, November 21, 1946). Ohio Historical Society Newspaper Archives: N410, Vol. 309.

for immigrant Japanese.”³⁷ According to Linehan’s research, Dillon Myer, chief of the WRA, was visiting Cleveland when he responded that “there would be no quota for Cleveland,” meaning that the WRA defended its relocation program, and resettlement in general.³⁸ Going further, this defense implied that the Japanese Americans would be free to resettle wherever they saw fit, with special emphasis being places in urban centers in the Midwest. This information was reported in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, which was used by Linehan in his essay. However, what Linehan does not mention is how extensively Myer details Cleveland resettlement, especially by portraying the Japanese as successful patriotic citizens.

Part of Myer’s intentions behind his tour of Cleveland was to survey the housing situation first hand, and to foster good community relations in the face of this problem with the Real Estate Board. According to the newspaper article, Myer met with resettlers at the Cleveland YWCA to discuss housing concerns. One issue among the Nisei was that there were too few cots in the barracks of the center, to which Myer responded that “the Red Cross in Pittsburgh had offered bedding for that purpose and that it was unlikely the WRA could do it.”³⁹ Even though it is a relatively minor incident, this shortage reveals just how resettlers were directly affected by this crisis. Going further, Myer goes on record as describing Cleveland’s efforts in helping the Nisei as “wonderful,” and cites the “Fighting Nisei in the 442nd Combat Team and others in

³⁷ Linehan, “Japanese American Resettlement,” pgs. 61-62.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ “Planners Study Nisei Housing: Hit In-Migration of All Peoples” (*The Cleveland Plain-Dealer*, July 19, 1945). Ohio Historical Society Microfilm Room: Roll 1574, “July-August, 1945.”

uniform (as) the best argument for fair treatment of their race group.”⁴⁰ This exchange is a rare example of the mainstream press in Cleveland directly addressing the plight of the Japanese Americans, but it was not enough to warrant many in-depth expositions on the Cleveland Japanese American population.

It is also worth mentioning that Myer had extensive Ohio roots. He graduated from The Ohio State University in 1914, and worked for a period of time for the university’s extension office. This would have shaped his interest in Ohio, particularly Cleveland, in relation to his duties as WRA director.

Finding employment for Japanese Americans was another component of the local resettlement program, but many resettlers found that they could locate jobs on their own. Because of the need for war-time workers, many Japanese were able to fill positions that were available in smaller businesses. This economic necessity was one reason why many resettlers looking for jobs found little or no discrimination in the majority of reported cases on employment. Despite this success, many Japanese did not find work in the major war businesses. A similar plight was felt by African American workers, but few problems were reported among European groups in Cleveland. In one report published in 1945, over 300 employers were listed as having hired Japanese American workers, yet very few were engaged in war production.⁴¹ Nevertheless, these jobs were essential for resettlers to regain their earning power, which in turn was used to pay their housing and living expenses.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* Also see Linehan for an extended argument on how the WRA and CRC used the Nisei military service as a way to promote assimilation and integration. “Dillon S. Myer Papers: Biographical Sketch” [http:// www.trumanlibrary.org/hstpape/myers.htm](http://www.trumanlibrary.org/hstpape/myers.htm).

⁴¹ Linehan, “Japanese American Resettlement,” pg. 67.

Employment and housing went hand in hand in Cleveland. As such, there was some discussion among the resettlement organizations as to how much resettlers should receive for rent. According to CRC documents from 1945, the WRA allocated a maximum of \$39 for the first month's rent to individual resettlers. This amount was felt to be too small by members of the CRC because an increasing number of families moving to Cleveland needed larger living spaces, and thus cost more money. It was proposed by members of the Community Services sub-committee, included chairman Alexander Robinson III, that the rent maximum should be increased to between \$60-\$65.⁴²

Although many Japanese Americans found jobs in Cleveland that fell between blue-collar and white-collar work, they still struggled to support their families as they planned their next step. Employers ranged from factories like Colonial Iron Works, which hired spray painters and draftsmen, to St. Luke's Hospital (X-ray technicians, nurse's aides) and the YMCA, as well as the WRA office itself. Another company, Phil-Mar Products, employed about 300 resettlers until rapid layoffs cut about 250 of them in late 1945.⁴³ As mentioned earlier, George Trundle even employed several Japanese workers, including a Nisei couple whose husband was an engineer from the University of Michigan, at his farm in rural Cuyahoga County. Although there was some independence among resettlers to find work during the war, many employers in Cleveland still used the WRA and the Hostel to post work notices. Examples of the types of employment advertised ranged from mushroom picking and structural engineering in northern

⁴² Letter from Alexander Robinson III, chairman, Community Services sub-committee, to Dorothy Barber, WRA representative in Cleveland, June 27, 1945, Federation for Community Planning: 1913-1974, Container 16, Folder 390. Western Reserve Historical Society Archives.

⁴³ Linehan, "Japanese American Resettlement," pg. 67.

Ohio, to agricultural-based work outside the state in nearby Michigan.⁴⁴ Such diverse employment opportunities indicate an accepting attitude towards Japanese Americans in a large cross section of Cleveland's economy.

The image of the hard-working, low-key resettler was carefully fostered by the CRC, the WRA, and the social service organizations involved in resettlement. Isolated instances of Japanese resettlers expressing dissatisfaction with their situation in Cleveland were seen as a threat to the public image of resettlement, if not the resettlement organization itself. The case of George Ohta provides a typical example. In August 1946, a letter was written to the CRC about Ohta, a twenty-seven year old Nisei who had been living in Cleveland with his mother and two sisters before returning to the West Coast. According to Beatrice Burr, Executive Secretary to George Trundle of the CRC, Ohta and his family had an apartment at 4901 Herman Avenue and had damaged furniture there to the tune of \$200. Ohta got upset when the landlord increased his rent, and proceeded to break more furniture before leaving the city. In response, Trundle addressed a letter to Mr. Ohta, in which he appealed not only for the reimbursement of damages, but also recounted his actions as a reflection upon all Japanese Americans in Cleveland:

We have been proud of our resettlers in Cleveland and of the reputation which they have established as thrifty, hard working, law abiding citizens. Unfortunately, it takes only one or two experiences, such as the one for which you were responsible, to arouse a feeling of distrust which, in the long run, causes many innocent persons to suffer.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pgs. 67-68.

⁴⁵ Cleveland Resettlement Committee, "Letter from Beatrice Burr to George Trundle" (Cleveland, OH: August 9, 1946). Federation for Community Planning Records: 1913-1974, Container 16, Folder 389. Western Reserve Historical Society Archives. Also can be cited as "Letter from George Trundle to George Ohta," but it turns out that Burr drafted the letter to be sent to Ohta, hence my use of the citation.

Similar approaches were used in addressing the Nisei delinquency problem in Chicago between their CRC and the Japanese American community. However, it is probable that the white leadership in Cleveland dealt with this issue by reflecting it on the Japanese American people because of their inclination to take charge of Cleveland resettlement rather than allow the degree of Japanese American leadership that was present in Chicago.

It is important to note the proximity of this exchange to the closing of the CRC several months later. As the West Coast was reopened to Japanese Americans earlier in 1946, many Japanese Americans across the country, and in Cleveland, chose to return to their former homes. According to Linehan, “(the CRC) feared that many resettlers view(ed) Cleveland as ‘a temporary stop-over between now and the time they can return.’”⁴⁶ In other words, they felt it necessary to keep as many resettlers in Cleveland as possible, even if it meant the use of guilt tactics to put a good face on the Japanese Americans as assimilated individuals. Nevertheless, the CRC felt that building a strong Japanese American community in Cleveland was important to fostering their permanent presence in the city, even if its own presence would disappear after the war.

As the war drew to a close, the CRC and WRA were conscious of the fact that their services would soon no longer be needed. In what would seem to be their final mission, the agencies pushed for two interrelated goals: the formation of exclusively Japanese American organizations, and keeping as many resettlers in Cleveland as possible. At every opportunity they encouraged resettlers to join all kinds of activity groups, ranging from baseball and bowling

⁴⁶ Linehan, “Japanese American Resettlement,” pg. 69.

leagues to community fellowships.⁴⁷ In fact, the number of organizations made exclusive to Japanese Americans grew to the extent that resettlers formed their own short-lived committee in July 1945 to document these groups. One of their reports mentions several prominent organizations, such as the Young Buddhists' Association, Issei Club, Nisei Christian Fellowship, and the Young Nisei Bowling League.⁴⁸ This type of social recreation resembles the activities in Chicago during this time in that they focused solely on Japanese Americans while balancing their Japanese heritage with their American mainstream models of recreation and upbringing.

These efforts were also expressed by major figures in Cleveland resettlement. Trundle, for example, in addition to leading the CRC from an administrative position, was also very willing to interact on a personal level with resettlers. He hosted a get-together of forty Issei and Nisei at his home in late summer 1945, near the end of the CRC's tenure in Cleveland. Along with his executive secretary, Beatrice Burr, Trundle personally donated \$20 for a Christmas party for Japanese children in the Cuyahoga Nisei Club.⁴⁹ While the CRC made assimilation and integration part of a broader mission in its three and a half year existence, it is important to remember that an undercurrent of charitable outreach and social cohesion existed on a personal, less publicized level, which must be taken into account when considering the long-term ramifications of Japanese American resettlement in Cleveland.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pgs. 70-71.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Compiled from various CRC reports in early 1946, Container 16, Folders 389-390, Western Reserve Historical Society Archives

If the CRC acted to serve Japanese Americans on an exclusively local level with minimal Japanese American leadership, the Cleveland Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) was made up of mostly Nisei resettlers after the war to expand efforts in national lobbying for favorable legislation while still maintaining a focus on community bonding. The Cleveland chapter was formed in 1946 by active Japanese Americans following the dissolution of the CRC. One prominent founder was Abe Hagiwara, who shortly after left Cleveland to work with Chicago's resettlement program. Hagiwara was instrumental to the League's formation because of his educational background at Case Western Reserve University, as well as his active resume that included work as the recreation director of the Cleveland YMCA and the city's Boys Club.⁵⁰ Despite his departure, the Cleveland JACL grew steadily in membership through its first few years; in 1948, about 125 individuals were recognized as due-paying members.⁵¹ This agency was initially quite small in its operations, with a budget of about \$14,000. Yet it was well organized to the extent that it had a clear sense of its goals as a social/political action group in post-war Cleveland.

One principal goal was community participation, both local and national in scope. Fundraising was often employed to support the JACL and to sustain the activities it sponsored, such as the various Nisei sports clubs, community picnics, and holiday parties. Coordinated

⁵⁰ Chicago Resettlers Committee, "Personal Data: Abe Hagiwara, April 5, 1947" (Chicago, IL: 1947). Miscellaneous Pamphlets on Japanese in Chicago, JASC Legacy Center Archives.

⁵¹ "Minutes of the Midwest District Council: June 12, 13, 1948," Henry Tanaka Papers: Container 1, Folder 3. Western Reserve Historical Society Archives. The \$14,000 figure is referenced on the Cleveland JACL's website under "JACL History," <http://www.lkwdpl.org/jacl/history.htm> Access date unknown

efforts between the Cleveland and Chicago chapters to raise money on behalf of the Atlantic District Council of the JACL made about \$11 million of the \$14 million total raised by the entire Midwest District.⁵² The JACL also kept ties with some of the religious groups that had been active in Cleveland resettlement. For example, the American Friends Service Committee, in conjunction with the JACL, commissioned a relief fund for Japan in which \$5000 was raised by Japanese in and around the city, which was sent to Japan in November 1946.⁵³ Such aid to Japan could have been seen as troublesome for Japanese Americans, but the JACL enjoyed a favorable reputation as a hard-working Japanese American organization made up of loyal, patriotic citizens.

The Cleveland JACL also did its part in representing the interests of its Japanese American constituency through lobbying. It mailed mass letters to representatives in Congress, and urged citizens of Japanese descent in Cleveland to show their unity and civic pride as loyal Americans by doing the same. Reparations for internment were often the rallying point for JACL chapters across the United States, and Cleveland was no different. JACL officials in Cleveland brought in city lawyers, as well as outside help from Chicago, to help Japanese file claims with the federal government to seek redress.⁵⁴ Even though the Evacuation Claims Act

⁵² “Minutes of the Midwest District Council: June 12, 13, 1948,” Western Reserve Historical Society Archives.

⁵³ Cleveland Japanese American Committee for Japan Relief, “Memorandum of Agreement between agencies cooperating in relief work in Japan.” No date. Henry Tanaka Papers: Container 2, Folder 4. Western Reserve Historical Society Archives.

⁵⁴ Cleveland JACL, “Meeting: June 1949.” Henry Tanaka Papers: Container 1, Folder 3. Western Reserve Historical Society Archives. Reparations were achieved in the late-1980s due in large part to the JACL’s persistent lobbying efforts.

was passed in 1948, it was only a token gesture that amounted to little compensation or apology. The effort to renew the Fair Employment Practices Commission, an executive order that evolved to protect against discrimination in the workplace and was killed in 1946, was a great concern judging from local JACL documents around 1948. Letters, memorandums, even state senator listings were used so that people could express their support in print and with campaign contributions.⁵⁵

Perhaps the most significant change on the federal level at this time was the passage of the Walter-McCarren Act in 1952. This Act permitted a slightly higher Japanese immigration quota and, more importantly, allowed Japanese immigrants, including Issei who had been living in the U.S. for decades, to become naturalized citizens. The Cleveland JACL monitored the debates and the proceedings in Congress with great interest, and consistently took the time to mention it in their minutes: “We have already asked you to send letters to your respective senators urging them to suggest to Senator McFarland, the majority floor leader of the Senate that this omnibus legislation be placed on the legislative calendar.”⁵⁶ When the Walter-McCarren Act passed in both the House and Senate over a presidential veto in May 1952, chairman Shigeo Wakamatsu made sure to emphasize that “the very fine letter written by President Henry Tanaka (of the Cleveland JACL)...was read into the Congressional Record by Senator McCarren...”⁵⁷ Clearly this was a moment of pride not just for the Cleveland JACL and

⁵⁵ Cleveland JACL, “Letter for Fair Employment Practices Commission.” Henry Tanaka Papers: Container 2, Folder 4. Western Reserve Historical Society Archives.

⁵⁶ Cleveland JACL, Memo from chairman of Midwest District Council, March 6, 1952. Henry Tanaka Papers: Container 2, Folder 3. Western Reserve Historical Society Archives.

⁵⁷ Cleveland JACL, “June 1952 minutes.” Henry Tanaka Papers: Collection 2, Folder 3. Western Reserve Historical Society Archives.

its Japanese American citizens, but for Issei and Nisei all over the country; it was a step towards complete recognition as American citizens. These new-found rights accentuated the Cleveland JACL's local programs, like the Sho-Jo-Ji Dancers, which in turn emphasized Japanese American cultural and generational differences as positive representations of ethnic identity.

Almost 1,100 Japanese Americans lived in Cleveland in 1952, a number less than half of the estimated 3,100 near the end of the Second World War.⁵⁸ Many had made what could be considered their third migration (and even more in some cases) to the West Coast: from forced evacuation and internment, to resettlement in Cleveland, and back again. The CRC and WRA were vital organizations for the families, the students, and the single individuals who came to the city to save and start again. These agencies liked to keep their efforts relatively low-key, because that is what they expected of the resettlers. This in turn was reflected in the lack of Japanese American leadership in the CRC, and ultimately played a part in the choice not to renew it to serve on a long-term basis.

Dispersal was the key, whether it was ethnic, geographic or, to a much lesser extent, social. In housing, employment, and community activities, the Japanese Americans in Cleveland maintained their status as hard-working, loyal American citizens while, at the same time, this image of integration and social cohesion was publicly fostered to communicate and educate the public at-large. Examples from the local press may not provide much direct information because of how infrequently stories about resettlement were published. However, what they lack in specific content about Japanese Americans in Cleveland is supplemented by stories that illustrate

⁵⁸ Linehan, "Japanese American Resettlement," pg.75.

how social service organizations functioned in the greater community, and how this ultimately filtered down to resettlement in Cleveland.

Conclusion

The problem is that acceptance by accommodation exacts a high price. What is sacrificed is the individual's own self-acceptance. It (in turn) places an exaggerated emphasis on surface qualities like a pleasant, non-offensive manner, neat grooming and appearance, nice homes, well-behaved children. Though we may be seen by others as model Americans, this acceptance...has left a permanent scar.¹

This statement by Amy Iwasaki Mass, a former Nisei internee, describes the dilemma of “accommodation” by the Japanese Americans on a broad, socio-psychological level. One of the primary objectives of my research was to investigate the delicate nature of social cohesion among Japanese Americans in Chicago and Cleveland, specifically the inner workings of the community resettlement agencies that assisted the Japanese American resettlers. While these community organizations were created to assist Japanese Americans directly, they were also present to repair the economic, psychological, and social damage of internment. Of course, the scope of these efforts differed between the cities because of population, leadership, and social organizational structure differences, which affected the lifespan of these organizations. This raises the question: what made Chicago and Cleveland so similar and yet also different in their resettlement efforts that they were worthy of an intense historical study?

First, the cities were among the most prominent urban centers in the Midwest for economic and social mobility. The wartime economies of each teemed with businesses that could be filled by Japanese Americans, and the WRA found this compatible with its desire to have the resettlers achieve economic stability. These business interests also played a role in

¹ Paul R. Spickard, *Japanese Americans: The Formation and Transformations of an Ethnic Group* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1996), pgs. 131-132.

wanting to hire Japanese Americans to fill positions that were not, or could not, be taken up by other ethnic workers. Because many of the early resettlers were Nisei, this was not a problem, but for Issei it became an issue of how to adjust their minimal industrial skills to fit the needs of an urban lifestyle-- one of many generational gaps that existed during and immediately after the war. Both Chicago and Cleveland made major strides in bridging these differences by promoting broad community interaction that was usually modeled after American forms of recreation, but was specifically Japanese American in interest.

Housing was also a problem in Chicago and Cleveland, one met with both temporary and permanent solutions. Both cities established hostels, which did not last long because of the relative stability that the Japanese Americans met when they arrived in the Midwest. This stability allowed Japanese Americans to rebound enough financially to find suitable housing on their own. Many Issei and Nisei even went to real estate and insurance companies that catered to Japanese Americans, more so in Chicago than Cleveland.

Unlike mainstream publications in Chicago and Cleveland, these businesses were advertised in Japanese American newspapers like the *Chicago Shimpo* and periodicals like *Scene*. The former press was likely to report on national or peripheral stories related to the Japanese Americans during the war, while the latter concentrated solely on building a network of Japanese American resources. From these efforts, close-knit communities were born not out of ethnic or geographical proximity, but out of social cohesion promoted by community resettlement agencies in both cities.

However, there were significant differences between Chicago and Cleveland that established each city as a distinct example of resettlement. The first was that Chicago had a much greater Japanese American population than Cleveland. Chicago benefited from the WRA's focus on Chicago as the beacon city for resettlement. Not that Cleveland's population was insignificant; it was the third-most popular destination for resettlers during the war. However, Chicago's larger, more anonymous setting made it easier for Japanese Americans to find their own niche in forming a community and rebuilding their lives.

Another difference was the scope of Japanese American coverage on resettlement issues elsewhere in the United States. Because Cleveland did not have a Japanese American press, Japanese Americans then were unable to learn easily about the status of resettlers in other parts of the country. Chicago, on the other hand, was equipped to host different perspectives on resettlement because it had enough circulated materials to reach a broader audience. For example, Chicago had Japanese American reporters who wrote about specific resettler communities in the East and Midwest, with cities like New York and Detroit getting their own features. In the former, anonymity was even more pronounced as the writer describes the community's self-perception as "a drop in the bucket."² Generational and social differences were mentioned in the report on Detroit's Japanese Americans, as many of the resettlers were younger Issei and their families. As a result, "the younger Nisei...left the motor city for Chicago and New York, which had more to offer in the way of social gatherings."³

² Eddie Shimano, "Too Busy Assimilating: Manhattan Japanese are a 'little different'," *Chicago Reference Dictionary: 1950*. JASC Legacy Center Archives.

³ Jon Mishima, "It's An Old Japanese Custom; A West Coast Pattern Repeats Itself in Detroit," *Chicago Reference Dictionary: 1950*. JASC Legacy Center Archives.

These reports hinged on the fact that the West Coast was full of prejudice against Japanese Americans, and that it was better to stay in these Eastern and Midwestern cities. Bill Hosokawa recounts an interview with a former internee who resettled to the eastern United States and returned to Seattle once the West Coast was open to Japanese Americans after the war. The report states that the young man was bitter about how the Japanese American communities had reformed on the West Coast. Speaking about Nisei who settled in the East and Midwest, “In social and economic acceptance, they’re a whole generation ahead of their position in 1941. Back East they’re no longer stereotyped members of a stereotyped minority.”⁴ He blames the Japanese Americans themselves for getting too familiar with the old clustered communities on the West Coast: “Didn’t the evacuation teach them anything? Didn’t they benefit at all from that bitter experience? Or was (it all) just a part of a happy, leisurely, expense-paid vacation in Uncle Sam’s desert resorts?”⁵ This anger is not simply out of spite, but out of the desire to gain something positive from the internment experience, which was that the Japanese Americans were able to form communities in the East and Midwest that were not racially singled-out, but rather could work with and apart from the greater urban communities to function as an empowered group of people.

But, the greatest difference was the make-up of each city’s respective community resettlement agencies, and the implications this difference had for long-term presence in Chicago and Cleveland. Chicago was unique in that its large resettler population held the most power in

⁴ Bill Hosokawa, “Futile Little Rat Races,” *Chicago Reference Dictionary: 1950*. JASC Legacy Center Archives, pg. 65.

⁵ *Ibid.*

the Chicago Resettlers Committee, but that was not always the case. The CRC was created in 1946, when the WRA was disbanded with the end of the war and the closing of the camps. Nisei advisors were employed by the WRA on a very informal level, but overall the Japanese Americans who chose to resettle in Chicago had very little say over what services were at their disposal. Despite this, the Japanese American community grew to prominence in Chicago in the early post-war years, as more resettlers chose to call the city home, and with that came a uniquely Japanese American emphasis on social cohesion through networking as opposed to outright ethnic and geographical clustering. The ultimate success of the CRC was so significant that today it exists to serve Japanese American senior citizens in Chicago as the Japanese American Service Committee.

By contrast, the Cleveland Resettlement Committee was created in 1943, three years before the Chicago Resettlers Committee took shape. In a way, this was not unexpected because Cleveland had long been known as a city with a strong social service network to support such an organization. Nevertheless, it did not have the Japanese American foundation in terms of numbers of resettlers to create a push towards ethnic leadership, and the Committee was led largely by white business and community leaders like George Trundle. Despite providing services in employment, housing, and social recreation throughout the war, the CRC did not last beyond 1946, and was absorbed by a larger social service agency. The Cleveland JACL, however, stepped in to fill the need for a representative organization in Cleveland, only this time led by Japanese Americans that stood for local and national interests.

Combined, Chicago and Cleveland offer a most distinct picture of Japanese American resettlement in the Midwest during and after World War II. The prejudices of the West Coast were largely absent from these new communities, and what incidents did occur can be treated as aftereffects from the national perception of the Japanese Americans as “Japs” or “enemy aliens.” The long-term ramifications of resettlement in the Midwest stem from the fact that internment ostensibly led to a Japanese American culture taking shape in the Midwest, especially Chicago and Cleveland. Examining elements like the WRA’s early resettlement program, the local mainstream and Japanese American press, and the community resettlement agencies has revealed a great deal about the early Japanese American community in the Midwest, and is an important first step to a greater understanding of post-war urban Midwestern culture.

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